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November 1980 £1

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What Prospects of War or Peace?

Richard Lowenthal
The Shattered Balance

Michael Howard
Protest & Survival

Wolfgang Leonhard
Soviet Empire in Crisis

Edited by Melvin J. Lasky & Anthony Thwaite

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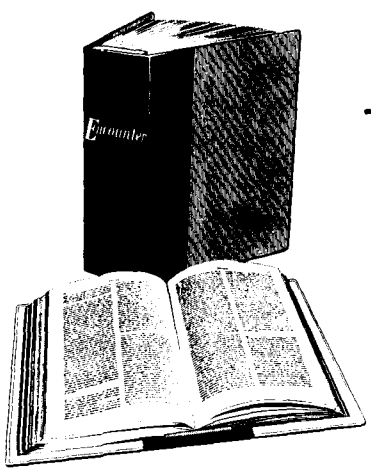

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Clive Sinclair

Ashkenazia

MANY OF MY fellow-countrymen do not believe in the existence of God. I am more modest. I do not believe in myself. What proof can I have when no one reads what I write? There you have it; my words are the limit of my world. You will therefore smile at this irony; I have been commissioned by our government to write the official English-language *Guide to Ashkenazia*. A guide to *where*? Pick up an atlas. Can you point out Ashkenazia? Don't be embarrassed. The only time we have been news in the last sixty years is when Simcha Nisref won the Nobel Prize for Literature. This gave our Ministry of Culture ideas above its station. Not only has it financed the first International Conference in Yiddish Language and Literature, which opens at the Jagellonian University tomorrow, it has also decided to put Ashkenazia on the map. This is my task: *Fiat Ashkenazia*! Copies of the *Guide* will be placed in the room of every delegate. Including Jake Tarnopol's. Jake Tarnopol, novelist; notorious, American. It was on account of him that I agreed to write the *Guide* in the first place. This was a calculated sacrifice. In exchange for an introduction to Jake Tarnopol I have lost my good name. My colleagues in the Writers' Circle now refer to me as "Nisref's lapdog." They are all jealous of Nisref of course. But who can blame them? Nisref, alone, has been translated into English. Yiddish is the womb in which the rest of us are trapped, nameless babblers of the *mamaloshen*. Meaning it as a compliment a critic in the *Forverts* recently called my latest novel: "Tarnopolian." What fame, to be an adjective! When I buttonhole my qualifier I will beg him to sponsor my publication in America. In America I will be somebody!

Today is Independence Day. Dioramas on open trucks give a panorama of Ashkenazia's achievements, though the inebriated and over-dressed crowds are a more realistic representation of our national potential as producers and consumers of vodka and textiles. However, our most valuable asset is not mentioned in the *Guide*; my paragraph on our uranium deposits was overstamped CENSORED. This is not surprising. Yesterday, knowing there would be no newspapers on a national holiday, our Prime Minister made an unannounced visit to Berlin where he concluded a secret deal with Chancellor Hitler. If the news leaked out that he had sold our uranium to the Germans there would be pandemonium. Let me tell you something else that isn't in the *Guide*; our fear of Germany. Not many of my fellow-citizens take much stock in God, but we all worry about Hitler. Of course we wouldn't be a nation at all if it wasn't for Germany, something Hitler would like to amend if his words are to be believed. After the Great War we were granted autonomy, along with the Armenians and the Kurds, in a sub-clause of the Treaty of Versailles. Five years later we seceded from Poland altogether and declared ourselves an independent state. Poland was weak, Russia was in the middle of a civil war, Germany was ruined. We survived. Then Germany elected Hitler. Half our politicians believe that Hitler should be placated, the other half that he should be outfaced. Since the majority of our people favour a quiet life the former have prevailed. But we have our prophets.

Perhaps you've read Nisref's latest novel, *Wawel*? It starts with the premise that Britain and France threw Czechoslovakia (another creation of Versailles) to the dogs at Munich. What follows is a terrible vision. Having overrun the Continent the Germans turn their attention to Ashkenazia. Here Nisref reworks

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an ancient legend. Cracow—our capital city—is dominated by a limestone hill—Wawel. Today it is topped by a castle, hitherto it was the domain of a fire-breathing dragon. In order to build the castle, which was required to defend the city, the dragon had to be appeased. So the ruler drove scores of his subjects into the dragon's cave where they were incinerated and devoured. This is the inspiration of *Operation Wawel*, Hitler's code name for the destruction of Ashkenazia and its people. Nisref turns the dismemberment of our name—a nation burnt to *ashes* by the *Nazis*—into a metaphor for our fate. Needless to say, *Wawel* provoked an outcry in Ashkenazia. It was branded obscene, the morbid fantasies of a madman. Hitler was not amused either. He threatened to visit Ashkenazia in person and destroy every copy of the book. Instead our Prime Minister went to Berlin.

He returns from his latest visit in time to open the Conference. A crowd has gathered outside the University to greet him. As the Prime Minister walks up the steps towards the great oak doors a lone demonstrator dressed in a dragon-skin pelts him with mushrooms. A smudged leaflet explains that the mushrooms symbolise the atomic bombs Germany will build from our uranium. My comrades in the Writers' Circle are convinced that the man is a hired lackey, paid by Nisref to publicise *Wawel*. Such is the informed gossip as we jostle one another in an attempt to find the secretary whose job is to match us with the badges that bear our names. "Clement Stashev", she cries. "Here", I say. "Olga Stashev", says my wife. But so indecent is her dress she can find nowhere to pin her tag. Have I mentioned my wife? The daughter of an Ashkenazi man and an English Jewess, which gives her certain advantages; above all, she is bilingual. In fact she is one of our top translators, presently competing for this year's plum; Jake Tarnopol's latest—*Dreams After Death*. Meanwhile, she has just completed translating my novel into English—all my English is fit for is the *Guide to Ashkenazia*. Her fee? A meeting with Tarnopol. Olga is also a journalist, with a weekly column in *Forverts*. Once she wrote about two dogs, but the disguise was transparent. One dog barked all day, the other learned the language of humans; while the former was more original, the latter earned the money. This was sufficient for my colleagues to dub me "Olga's poodle." Of course my wife is correct, translators are more important than writers in Ashkenazia. But in America I will be the celebrity. Fools! See how they ogle Olga as we take our seats in the auditorium. My accomplished wife.

THE GREAT HALL is full. The important guests—including Jake Tarnopol—sit in the front row. We—the writers of Ashkenazia—sit at the back. Simcha Nisref is on the platform between the Minister of Culture and the Prime Minister. The theme of the Premier's opening speech is "the renaissance in Yiddish Literature." Our Leonardo is Simcha Nisref of course, but who are the young lions? Every neck in the back row cranes forward to catch the names, our ears make ready to burn. What madmen we are! Is the Prime Minister our public relations officer? He is not interested in us, he is only here to heap praises upon the already famous. So it's Simcha Nisref this, and Simcha Nisref that. While the applause is still crackling Nisref walks to the podium.

"'I would tell you, ladies and gentlemen'", he begins, "'how much better you understand Yiddish than you suppose.' Not my words, but Kafka's. So what did he mean? I'll explain. Yiddish is the language of the heart, the heart is informed by suffering, suffering is esperanto. If you listen with your heart you will understand. There is a Yiddish proverb which states: 'The heart is half a prophet.' Our hearts tell us the consequences of every action, they can see into the future. Now the world has begun to listen to us at last—let us pray it is not too late. Friends, the Nobel Prize was for Yiddish Literature, not for Simcha Nisref. Fellow writers, seize the time!"

At which point my wife rises so quickly that her breasts flop in and out of her dress. Nisref, old though he is, stares gleefully. "You're nothing but a *pornographnik*!" Olga shouts. "Your stories are not filled with love of humanity, but with fear of women. If—God forbid—we enjoy sex we are in league with the devil. Have any of you read *Wawel* properly? To me Hitler is merely the agent of retribution, the angel of death. The real culprit is the Prime Minister's mistress. So what has Nisref got

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against women? Believe me, it has nothing to do with religion or philosophy, but everything to do with vanity. You know that I am one of Nisref's translators, but that is not enough for the old goat, there are other services he requires. 'Come swimming with me in the Vistula', he begged. Like a fool, I agreed. He took me into the country, to an empty stretch of the river. 'Here we can swim without costumes', he said. I am a married woman, I refused."

The wives of my fellow writers can contain themselves no longer, their titters evolve into fits of giggling. The husbands—cuckolds every one—fill the hall with their hoots of derision. They are laughing at me, and I am red with shame. I do not like to admit this, but I am also jealous. I dread what is coming next.

"Nisref had no such qualms", continues Olga, "down came his trunks. 'Touch it', he pleaded. Touch that thing! It was dark and shrivelled and covered with scabs of dry skin that looked like parchment. 'Please', he said. 'If you do I'll introduce your husband to my American publisher.' I couldn't believe my ears. I turned and ran. In short, Nisref hates women because we find him repulsive." Press photographers are fighting to get a close-up of my wife's bosom. Thanks to them the stewards cannot get near enough to evict her. "Sit down", I hiss, "or I'll strangle you." "Why are you so upset?" says Olga. "Because I didn't tell you about it before, or because I didn't get your book published in America?" Forget me, what about Nisref? Thank God, he doesn't look too upset. And the Prime Minister is beaming. With reason. He knows that tomorrow's front pages will be filled with pictures of Olga. The protest against his secret deal with Germany will be forgotten. My wife resumes her seat. The treacherous bitch!

Only Olga would have the gall to show herself at the Prime Minister's reception after a performance like that. Her presence casts a shadow over my triumph. Alone among the younger members of the Writers' Circle I have an official invitation—signed by the Minister of Culture himself. You should have seen their faces when I strolled past the doorman. Green. Now where is Tarnopol? I have suffered much for this moment. First, the *Guide*. Then, this morning: the Prime Minister's banalities, my wife's disgraceful exhibition, and an interminable paper on the origins of Yiddish. The woman who delivered it said she was a "structuralist." Since no one really knows where Yiddish began she had to *construct* a country whose language she called "Proto-Yiddish." To what purpose? So she would have a constant reference for the divergent forms of modern Yiddish, and know at once whether we in Cracow who say *strafn* are greater deviants than those in Lublin who say *strufn*.

But I must not mock. Any discipline which considers history an irrelevant nuisance cannot be all bad. There she is, deep in conversation with the Prime Minister. And why not? Politics is a form of structuralism, after all. So is writing guide-books. Nisref joins the Prime Minister. I listen. "Is what I hear true", he asks, "that you have sold our uranium to Germany?" "Maybe, maybe not", says the Prime Minister. "But I'll tell you this; Hitler hates communists more than he hates Jews. In Russia we have a common enemy. This is all I need to know. I am a politician, not a philosopher." "You are a fool", replies Nisref. "You want to know the truth?" says the Prime Minister. "I'll tell you. It became necessary to pay for our survival." "With our souls!" cries Nisref. "You have paid protection money to the devil. Must we have a catastrophe every generation? Is this what it means to be the chosen people? Mark my words, your deal with Germany will bring destruction to Ashkenazia." Suddenly I am faced with a bigger problem than the Prime Minister; how to construct a conversation with Nisref's wife. She is approaching fast. "Olga", I whisper, "make yourself scarce." "Don't be an idiot", she replies. "My dear", says Nisref's wife, "I must thank you. The old fool was beginning to think he'd become irresistible to women. Perhaps your little revelation has brought him to his senses."

TARNOPOL, TOO, wants to praise my wife. "Do you know Freud?" he asks. "Well, he maintained that writing is motivated by a wish to attract members of the opposite sex. He hit the nail on the head in my case. My desire to write coincided with puberty. I celebrated the publication of my first story with my first ever fuck. And the more I published the more I got laid, until I ended up married to a *Vogue* cover-girl. Now I have to

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write to pay off her alimony. Some joke; my winged muse has become my albatross. What a country! Have you visited America?" What a question! Would we be here now if we'd ever made it to America? "Instant gratification", says Tarnopol, "that's America. A cowboy drives his herd into the kitchen, and five minutes later a beautiful waitress is serving us hamburgers in our automobiles. And as for desserts—we have one hundred and fifty different flavours of ice-cream to choose from." His eyes are scoops, my wife's breasts the flavour of the month. But don't flatter yourself, Tarnopol. It's not on account of your looks that she's all over you. A balding Jew approaching middle age is no one's idea of physical beauty.

"You'd be a big hit in America", says Tarnopol, "you remind me of Jane Fonda." "Ah, Jane Fonda", says Olga, flattered. "She has courage. Just what we lack in Ashkenazia. Oh, we mock the authorities behind their backs. Do you know why our police force is called the 'militcia'? Because we measure intelligence in 'cias' and a thousandth of a 'cia' is. . . . But as a nation we cut our cloth to fit our needs." Clearly, the cut of Olga's cloth suits Tarnopol down to the ground, so much so that he alters the place-cards in the banqueting hall to be beside her at dinner. Here, finally, he asks: "What do you do?" "My husband is a writer", replies Olga, "and I am a translator." "In that case", he says, "I hope you are not responsible for the English version of the menu: 'Boiled Buttock of Beef, Sterilised String Beans, Bags filled with Plum Jam.' Not very appetising." "That was the work of our state translators", says Olga, "a bunch of fools. I translate literature. To tell you the truth, I am hoping to translate *Dreams After Death* into Yiddish." Tarnopol laughs. "If your work's good—it's yours", he says. "Bring some examples to my hotel tomorrow—before lunch." I love my wife.

The man at the Hotel Rambam's reception desk tells Olga that Tarnopol is out. She ignores him and goes straight to Tarnopol's room. Tarnopol does not recognise her. "I'm sorry", he says, "I was expecting someone else." "I'll go", says Olga. "Please", he says, "let me explain. When I opened the door I thought I would see my grandfather's ghost. This morning I strolled down to the Kazimierz district to take a look at the old synagogues. Well, I'm ready to return when I see this hasidic type staring at me. He looks familiar. '*Jacob, mein klein Jacob*', he whispers. It's my grandfather. Who is dead. I panic. He follows me back to the hotel. There is a knock on my door. Instead of my grandfather's ghost a beautiful woman is standing there. Perhaps you can appreciate my confusion. The strangest thing is that today is the anniversary of my grandfather's death. Look, I even brought an electric *yortzeit* from America to burn for him." Tarnopol points to a small glass in which flickers an imitation flame. "What more can he want?" "Perhaps he wants his freedom, like the rest of us", says Olga. "Sometimes I think we are all ghosts in Ashkenazia. We do not live in the 20th century, but in a timeless zone. Figments of your imagination. Perhaps your grandfather is sick of being your conscience. You want our burdens, we want your freedoms. Can't we do a deal?" Olga hands him her translation of my novel. "I must ask you something in return", Tarnopol replies.

EARLY NEXT MORNING, as we drive towards the Hotel Rambam, we are forced off the road by a speeding fire engine. The Rambam itself is swarming with firemen. Smoke is pouring from one of the upper windows. Like a heavenly choir the guests in their white night-clothes stand in a group answering when the receptionist calls their names. Only one is missing. "I can't be certain", says Olga, "but I think the smoke is coming from Jake's room." Sure enough Tarnopol's face appears at the cracked and sooty window-pane. Oh God, I pray, don't let my saviour be burnt to a cinder. Like the angel who rescued the Jews from the fiery furnace a fireman rises on a ladder that is pointing towards Tarnopol's room. Thereafter the rescue is rapid. Tarnopol is brought to the ground slung over the fireman's shoulder. He is not only breathing, but coughing. "What happened?" I ask. "I nearly died, that's all", Tarnopol replies. "I was asleep. Dreaming about my grandfather, of course. I was a little boy and he had come into my room to tuck me in. Only he kept pulling the blanket over my face. '*Shlof mein kind*', he hummed. Lucky for me I always was a disobedient brat. I woke up. Otherwise I would have suffocated in my sleep.

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Hey! You don't think my grandfather was trying to murder me, do you?" Later I ask a fireman: "Have you found the cause of the fire?" "You won't believe this", he replies, "but it was started by a short circuit in that electric *yortzeit* of his." He laughs. "What will the Americans think of next?"

Though Tarnopol feels he is the victim of a gross injustice he is full of remorse. "I wanted to do right by my grandfather", he says. "I wanted to let his memorial light burn twenty-four hours like the rabbis tell you. I thought an electric *yortzeit* would be safer than a candle in a glass. How was I supposed to know it was dangerous to run it off the current you have in Ashkenazia?" "Forget it", says Olga, "let's save what we can of the day." "But what about that manuscript you left with me?" he says. "You know it was destroyed, don't you?" Olga nods. "I only read a few chapters", he says, "but it had real quality. You'll have to let me make good your loss. Name your price." "We'll think of something", I say. Actually we have a copy, but why spoil his guilt? America, here we come!

To be more accurate we are driving in our imported Polski Fiat towards the town of Tarnopol, eponymous birthplace of the unquiet grandfather. It's a fair exchange; we take Tarnopol back to his past, he takes us into our future; we show each other what our lives might have been. Every few miles we stop so that the American can take a photograph. The countryside of Ashkenazia is at its most beautiful in the late summer, when the farmers are in the swaying fields gathering their harvest. Although we have been cut adrift from the historical process, the seasonal cycle keeps us in tune with a more fundamental motion. The rhythms of which are so perfect that they all but lull you into a belief in God. Who else could create such harmony? But the farmers put no trust in divinity; indeed they mock it, with their humanoid haystacks built upon skeletons of wood. Nor do they put their faith in modern inventions. They travel by horse and cart. Sometimes they wave as we speed past. It is a humid day, full of clouds and showers. Passing through one such downpour we roll up the windows so that condensation quickly obscures the windscreen, revealing also a message written with a fingertip: "I do love you." By whom? To whom? Is it just the ghost of a forgotten night with Olga? Or the echo of a guilty secret? Does she have a lover? My unfathomable wife. The words hover over my horizon for a few moments, until they are blown away by the de-mister. By the time we reach Tarnopol the sun is shining, and there is not a cloud in the sky.

After the rain, now in the sun, Tarnopol looks like a town built upon hot coals. Steam rises from the open sewers in picturesque tendrils, so densely in the back streets that the hasidim there do not seem to have their feet upon the ground at all. The boys are happy, jumping the puddles; but some of the young men in their greasy gaberdines look broken-hearted, sentenced to a life of unimaginative solipsism, banished forever from America. "Behold, your brothers", I say. Tarnopol, the man, two generations removed, is aghast. He jumps in fear as a black-garbed ancient grabs his arm, and tugs him toward a dilapidated synagogue. "Be a good Jew", he says, "perform a *mitzvah*, say a prayer for your grandfather's soul." Poor Jake! His tongue shrinks, his face turns bloodless; he is struck dumb, he faints. Olga unbuttons his shirt. She sprinkles eau-de-cologne upon his forehead. "Ashkenazia is not for you", she says, "it is too ugly." She is right; Tarnopol past is more than Tarnopol future can take. He opens his eyes. "I'm sorry", he says, "it must be the after-effects of all that smoke I inhaled this morning." Cured of his sentimental atavism, it is Jake's turn to take revenge. "If only Tarnopol didn't really exist", he says.

WE STOP HALF-WAY to Cracow for a picnic supper. The field we choose is full of stacks of drying grass, that look like *golem* awaiting the breath of life. Our food is in the shadow, we are in the sun. I remove my jacket. Tarnopol digs his fingers into the earth, as if making one last effort to root them. We break the bread and crumble the cheese. Some curious cows wander towards us, coloured black and white, like the world view of the hasidim. A slight breeze carries a foul stench from their direction. As I run, waving my arms, to shoo them away I see the source of the bad air; one of the creatures has a hole in its side, punched by its owner, out of which pumps a bright green fluid that looks as poisonous as it smells. Chasing the offensive cow into the neighbouring field I feel I am

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shaking off my previous persona—even Ashkenazia itself—which also was in danger of exploding from an overflow of gall. But no longer. Thanks to Jake Tarnopol, who is just about to give me horns.

An unnatural gust of wind catches the stack behind which we were sitting and disperses it in a bilious dance to reveal Olga and Tarnopol copulating like animals. Caught out the guilty man spills his seed upon Ashkenazia's soil. Is that who we are—the children of Onan? You throw out the old values, turn your back for a second, and look what happens! My heart is in my mouth. "Slut!" I scream. Olga, though naked, is unruffled. "What are you so upset about?" she says. "Don't tell me you've never imagined doing it with another woman. As far as I am concerned anticipation makes you as guilty as participation. Any attempt to resist temptation is merely hypocrisy." A hypocrite my polluted wife is not; she refuses to cover herself, unlike Tarnopol who kneels with his hand over his privates. "You're wrong, Olga", I say, "there is all the difference in the world between wanting and doing. Hitler might want to kill me, but I'll only be upset if he does. Thoughts are harmless; deeds are like demons let loose on earth. Once free there is no knowing what havoc they will cause. Already they are whispering in my ear, 'Divorce her, or better yet—kill her.' And why not? Isn't the most terrible implication of infidelity the contemplation of eternal loss? Translated into words your actions say, 'I am prepared to risk never seeing you again.' You and Tarnopol have created a world in which I do not exist. Now we must await the consequences." They are not long in coming, though who was to blame—Olga, Tarnopol, or the Prime Minister—historians will have to decide.

Suddenly we are engulfed by puffs of hot air as summer vanishes and the seasons accelerate. Hurricanes tear the hay-stacks apart. Blades of grass rip into us like green rain. Hail becomes a blizzard. We tumble to the ground and the grass piles around us until we are buried. The wind dies. I return from the grave. But Olga and Tarnopol look like fallen haystacks. Neither mound moves. Great mushrooms are growing in the sky. Flames lick the horizon as though Wawel's dragon were once again stalking the land. All that remains of my dumb heart-broken country is a field of wooden skeletons. Now the world will listen to me, for I am the guide to Ashkenazia. I am Ashkenazia!

Ornithological Petrarchan

(*It is difficult to portray bird voices in writing, because birds rarely make "human" sounds, and our interpretations vary: one person hears a call-note as* "teu", *another as* "chew" *or* "sioo." Peterson, Mountfort & Hollom, *A Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe*, Collins.)

*C*alidris *maritima* pipes *"Weak wit",*
Gypaetus barbatus thinly cries *"queer",*
the Pheasant's *"cork cock"* oft delights the ear,
the Little Stint, when flushed, has a sharp *"tit",*
Calidris alba calls on us to *"quit",*
the Reed Bunting's alarm call *"shit"* rings clear.
Is this *Calidris canutus* we hear?
Hark! a low *"nut",* in flight, a whistling *"twit".*

But what is this deep sighing *"oo-oo-oo"*
more moaning than *Strix aluco? "Quick, quick!"*
Turnix sylvatica's "croo croo croo CROOO"
bursts from a bush. A hard explosive *"prik"*
(from *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*) sends
exciting vibes to sensitive nerve-ends.

Peter Reading

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Richard Lowenthal

The Shattered Balance

Estimating the Dangers of War & Peace

BY COMMON CONSENSUS of informed observers inside and outside the Western countries, the transition from the 1970s to the '80s of our century has been marked by an acute sharpening of international conflicts with the West in a position of relative weakness. An apparent majority of articulate American opinion (as well as a majority of contributors to ENCOUNTER) perceives this Western weakness as due in the main to Western illusions about "*Détente*"—now happily overcome in the United States but still largely persisting in continental Western Europe—and their ruthless and coldblooded exploitation by the Soviet leaders; and it tends to see the remedy chiefly in greater all-round Western "toughness." By contrast, it is the thesis of this article that both the causes of present Western weakness and the remedies required are far more complex—and in particular, that the preservation (or restoration) of an effective balance of strength between West and East and the control of their conflict by negotiations (usually described as "*Détente*") are not alternatives, but complementary vital needs of Western policy.

To argue this case, it will be necessary to look back for a moment to the situation in the late 1960s—before the inauguration of *Détente* and at the height of the Viet Nam war. In our present debates, it is frequently forgotten that 1968 was also a low point of American strength, influence, and internal cohesion. That first major setback to American post-War policy had not been brought about by a failure to recognise the nature of Soviet policy or of the "Communist threat", but by a failure to recognise the limits of American military power. The greatness of President Truman in dealing with that threat had consisted in the fact that the same man who stopped Stalin's European offensive—by "the Truman doctrine", the Marshall Plan, the Berlin airlift, and the creation of NATO—also had the insight to cut American losses in China, because he understood that the absence of a cohesive force opposed to Communism in that country could not be replaced by American military intervention from outside. The crucial error of President Lyndon Johnson in Viet Nam was his decision, when faced with the growing disintegration of the South Viet Nam government, to try and replace the absence of solid popular support for it by a massive increase of American military forces on the Asian continent. The resulting senseless losses of American blood, American military and financial strength, American international prestige and American domestic unity are still effective factors in the present crisis. Even the self-delusions of the American intellectual Left about the "democratic" or "progressive" nature of Vietnamese Communism, now recalled in justified bitterness, were by no means a major cause of the American defeat in Viet Nam, but merely one of the consequences of the misguided attempt to defeat Communism by military intervention in a country where it had become identified with the national cause for a larger part of the population than could be mobilised against it.

The Achievement of Détente

THE NIXON-KISSINGER policy of *Détente*, starting from this low point in American strength, set itself the task of undoing as much as possible of the damage in order to restore a measure of foreign policy consensus at home and in the alliance and a measure of balance in relation to the Communist powers. It has lately become fashionable to debunk the record of Dr Kissinger; and he himself has contributed to the fashion by some rather vainglorious and irresponsible statements since he has been out of office. But the broad fact remains that, thanks chiefly to his policy, the American world position was largely restored and looked incomparably better by 1973 than it had in 1968–9.

The essential elements of that process of restoration were (besides the ending of the Viet Nam war) *1.* the first treaty limiting the competition between the United States and the Soviet Union in the field of strategic nuclear arms; *2.* the return of the Chinese People's Republic on the world scene as a potential balancing factor against Soviet power; *3.* the treaties establishing a *modus vivendi* based on the *status quo* in the heart of Europe, formerly the

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chief storm-centre of the Cold War, including both the *Ostverträge* of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Four-Power-Agreement on Berlin; and *4.* the breaking away of Egypt from the Soviet sphere of influence, begun in the early 1970s but sealed by American mediation at the end of the Yom Kippur war of 1973. Of these, the ending of the Viet Nam war was pursued with least consistency and success, due to the prolonged attempt to disguise the defeat for reasons of domestic policy, and to the consequent disappointment after the inevitable collapse of the sham compromise.

The essence of the other elements of *Détente* was the effort to create a new balance between American and Soviet strength. The SALT agreement was based both on recognition that the former clear American superiority in the strategic nuclear field was gone—it had largely disappeared, owing to a steady and unmatched Soviet armament effort, during the years Viet Nam had devoured—and that an approximate balance should now be preserved while limiting the further armament race as far as possible by negotiation. The approach to the Chinese People's Republic was deliberately conceived not as an alliance, but as the establishment of a triangular balance which would both improve American-Chinese relations and increase Soviet readiness for substantive and serious negotiations with the West. The support for the German Social Democrats' new *Ostpolitik*—at first hesitant but soon enough wholehearted—served both to eliminate West Germany's special conflicts with the Soviet bloc that had been a recurrent source of tensions within the Western alliance, and to calm what had long been a critical danger spot of East-West relations. It also prepared what soon became a general expansion of economic and cultural contacts and personal human relations between Western and Eastern Europe, as formalised in 1975 by the Conference on European Security and Cooperation.

The success of *Détente*, then, was not *based* on illusions, but on Western determination to restore and maintain a balance in a continuing conflict—by the needed diplomatic and military effort as well as by negotiations with the adversary. Yet it is true that it was in part accompanied by a *propaganda* of illusions which suggested to the American electorate that East-West negotiations were not merely a means to control the forms and limit the range of an ongoing conflict, but were a promising road for *ending* the conflict and creating a "stable structure of peace."

I never thought that President Nixon and Dr Kissinger believed in this prospect. I was and am convinced that they were fully aware that a conflict so deeply rooted both in the rivalry of two Superpowers and the contrast of their systems, and in the Communist ideological belief in the necessary conflict of different political systems, was not going to disappear short of a major historical change in the Communist system itself. But by "selling" *Détente* as a road towards ending the conflict, they made it more difficult to preserve the electorate's willingness to maintain the balance of strength.

The Instability of the Balance

THE MOST ELEMENTARY truth about the contemporary world is that it is characterised by multiple, uncoordinated, and ever more rapid changes in many directions at once. This means that any balance between two antagonistic world powers must be highly unstable. Any effort to control the conflict between them by a negotiated balance is all the time liable to be upset by unforeseen changes; at best, the balance may have to be renegotiated again and again. Changes in the balance may, of course, come about by deliberate actions of either side. But they may also be produced by developments beyond the control of either—be it in third countries or due to unforeseen internal changes within each of them.

In fact, since the end of 1973, a large variety of such changes has increasingly upset the balance on which the basic *Détente* agreements were founded. There have been the efforts of both sides to improve their military strength by more and increasingly modern armaments, and to expand their influence in Third World countries by peaceful or military means. There have been spontaneous developments in the Third World with damaging repercussions on the economic strength of the advanced industrial countries (primarily, though not only, in the West). There have been major internal changes and uncertainties in the United States, impairing its capacity both for action and negotiation in the international field. There have been less visible uncertainties also in the Soviet Union, connected above all with the approaching generation change in its leadership.

1. Contrary to the view propagated by the American opponents of the SALT agreements, I believe that the most upsetting military changes have *not* taken place in the field of *strategic* nuclear weapons. While both sides are frantically continuing the race for potentially decisive *technological* improvements, they appear to be broadly keeping abreast of each other. In the circumstances, it is still in the interest of both to prevent an unlimited *quantitative* race, hence to maintain and extend the quantitative limitations so far agreed. The Soviets, however, have in recent years achieved a major temporary breakthrough in the production and deployment of *medium-range* nuclear missiles capable of causing havoc in, among other areas, Western Europe without automatically provoking retaliation by strategic

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weapons stationed in the USA. Hence the NATO decision of last December to produce a corresponding number of American medium-range missiles for deployment in Western Europe, taken after several years of urging by West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt. In Schmidt's view, only such a decision and the beginning of the actual production of those weapons will make it possible to negotiate with the Soviets a limitation of medium-range missiles on both sides, as the NATO decision offered.

Another major qualitative change in the balance has been brought about by the rapid increase in the global mobility of Soviet airborne and seaborne conventional forces in the course of the last decade. This has given the Soviets no overall superiority in that field, but temporary regional superiority in key areas where no comparable Western presence exists right now—including the Persian Gulf region.

2. The list of shifts in territorial control is usually given in Western discussion as stretching from Angola via Ethiopia to South Yemen and from Cambodia to Afghanistan—all cases of changes achieved by military action of Soviet allies like Cuba and Viet Nam with Soviet support, or by the Soviet Union itself. In fact, the list should begin with the 1973 attack on Israel by Soviet-allied Arab states—but that failed and ended with the turn of Egypt to a pro-American orientation. The Soviet option for Ethiopia led to a similar reorientation by Somalia to the West. The Soviet-supported Vietnamese attack on Cambodia was the consequence of the biggest "territorial shift" of all—the increasingly anti-Soviet option of the post-Mao leadership of Communist China. It is true, of course, that while all the Soviet gains have been made by the aggressive use of military force, all the Western gains have been made peacefully. It is *not* true that, in the post-*Détente* years, only the Soviets have extended their territorial influence.

3. One of the major sources of international instability has been spontaneous developments in the Third World—from the first anti-Western oil boycott by Arab states (including anti-Communist Arab states, in the context of the 1973 war) through the damage done to the economy of the industrial nations (*and* the poorest Third World nations) by the successive price rises enacted by OPEC, down to the Iranian revolution. While it would be absurd to ascribe either OPEC's economic policy or the overthrow of the Shah to Soviet intrigue (and in fact the Soviet bloc has also suffered some damage from both) it cannot be doubted that the damage to the West has been incomparably greater and has affected the world-wide balance of forces to the detriment of the West.

4. One of the major factors in tipping the balance against the West has been inner-Western, and particularly inner-American, developments. The economic inflation/recession of 1974–5, combined with the initial strength of the Communists in the Portuguese revolution, temporarily

'Say, Just How Many Divisions Does the Pope Have?'

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encouraged Soviet hopes for a major internal crisis of the West. In the United States, a post-Viet Nam mood of widespread opposition to *any* American intervention against the use of Soviet or Soviet-allied military force in parts of the Third World, however weak the popular basis for the Communist action, prevented the Ford administration from actively countering Soviet enterprises in Angola and Ethiopia. While the post-Viet Nam demoralisation faded by 1976 and began to yield to a new patriotic pride, the Carter administration proved unable to establish a solid backing for a new foreign-policy consensus, including a clear sense of priorities and a readiness to make the efforts and sacrifices required, in Congress and with public opinion. Instead, an American society increasingly preoccupied with its unsolved domestic problems (rising inflation and stagnant or declining productivity, unmanageable cities and decaying mass education, growing unemployment with its special effect on the young and the minorities[1]) found its political expression in a multitude of special-interest groups destroying the cohesion of the Democratic majority party and producing recurrent deadlock between the administration and Congress. This growing political paralysis was bound to affect United States foreign policy also. Again and again it hampered both the administration's ability to resist Soviet pressure and support its allies—as in the case of military aid to Turkey—and its capacity for implementing agreements negotiated with the Soviets. The fate of the commercial treaty with Russia, crippled by Senate amendments alien to its purpose, seemed due to be repeated with regard to SALT II. As a result, the Soviets were increasingly given the impression that they had nothing either to fear or to hope from American policy—that they could afford to neglect likely American reactions in pursuing their expansive interests.

5. All this occurred in a situation in which a generational change in the Soviet leadership, not only at the top but far down into the middle echelons, is clearly in preparation. Any Soviet leadership must try to establish some balance between its interests in expanding its military strength and territorial power and its need for economic improvement, between the economic advantages of increased contact with the West and their danger for internal security and the cohesion of the Bloc. The experience of reduced American capacity for either hindering Soviet expansion or helping the Soviet economy must have tended to shift that internal Soviet balance to the side of arrogant self-reliance—precisely at the time when the decisions on the next leadership team are imminent.

The Acute International Crisis

TOWARDS THE END of 1979, the erosion of *Détente* and the worsening of the international balance were facing the West with two extremely serious dangers. One was the threat of Soviet medium-range missiles to Western Europe, to which (after years of hesitation) it reacted at last by the NATO decision of December. The other was the growing threat of Soviet military bases within striking distance of the Persian Gulf, which could be used, at any rate in case of war, to interdict the vital oil supplies to the Western powers and Japan. That threat had existed since the establishment of Soviet bases in South Yemen in 1977–8, but had hardly been taken notice of by Western policy so far.[2]

Both threats were dramatised by two Soviet actions of December 1979. One was the flat rejection of the negotiating offer coupled with the NATO decision on the American medium-range missiles, and the blunt Soviet demand for rescinding that decision as a precondition for any negotiation. The other was the armed intervention of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan which, while directly caused by the increasingly untenable position of the Soviet-backed local Communist rulers, was bound to increase the threat to the Persian Gulf and make it obvious to all. Both were the expression of an arrogant over-confidence which no longer seemed to care for preserving a negotiating relationship with the West—a relationship which in the Soviet view had brought no substantive benefits and seemed no longer needed to forestall substantive dangers. Without doing so in so many words, both in fact served notice on *Détente*, because the Soviet leaders appeared to feel strong enough to overthrow what was left of the eroded balance.

There were, in principle, three types of Western responses possible to that situation.

The first was to proceed with measures to strengthen the threatened positions of the West—by pursuing the NATO project for Europe-based American medium-range missiles, and by creating a "Rapid Deployment Force" for the protection of the Gulf area and trying to provide it with bases. The second was to "punish" the Soviets by a reduction of economic and other contacts, and particularly by shelving the SALT II agreement. The third was, on the contrary, to use the determined pursuit of measures of the first type in order to force the Soviets back to the negotiating table.

[1] Having just spent an academic year in the United States for the fifth time in twenty years, I feel bound to record, with all respect, my fundamental disagreement with M Alain Besançon's brilliantly-stated impression of the flourishing health of present-day American society and of its success in solving its domestic problems, even at the expense of a certain disinterest in world affairs. ("The View from East of Eden", ENCOUNTER, June.)

[2] See the excellent account by J. B. Kelly, "The Kremlin and the Gulf", ENCOUNTER, April 1980.

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The first course proved to be non-controversial among the chief partners of the Western alliance. The project of an American "Rapid Deployment Force" was generally welcomed by the NATO partners in Europe, and understanding was shown for the fact that it might result in the withdrawal of some American troops, ships and arms from the continent, requiring the Europeans—and primarily the West Germans—to take up the slack in their home area. The refusal *vis-à-vis* the Soviets to rescind the NATO decision on medium-range missiles was also firmly backed by at any rate the principal European powers concerned. Nor were any of those principal powers willing to accept or suggest a moratorium on the production—as distinct from the deployment—of the new missiles during the period of negotiations (they will in any case not be ready for deployment for the next three years); after all, a moratorium of production would allow the Soviets to stabilise or increase their present superiority in this weapon for years ahead.[3]

By contrast, the second and third courses were highly controversial from the start, being obviously incompatible with one another. They raised the fundamental question whether the West should, so to speak, welcome the Soviet-created crisis as an opportunity to get rid of the illusions of *Détente*, "isolate" the Soviet Union, and engage in an unlimited arms race unhampered by negotiations—or whether, at the same time as repairing its areas of military weakness, it should continue negotiations on strategic arms control and indeed force the Soviets to extend them to the field of medium-range missiles. The former attitude was adopted by a majority of American public opinion now joining the earlier opponents of SALT; and it became part of the electoral platform of the Republican Party. The alternative was advocated by the leading countries of continental Western Europe, and most explicitly by the Federal Republic of Germany. In between, hovering uneasily, was the Carter administration which had first proclaimed the moralising concept of "punishing" the Soviet Union (and shelved the ratification of SALT II, which on the very eve of the invasion of Afghanistan had at last seemed possible to the Senate in deference to a wave of public opinion), but remained aware of the costs and risks of an unlimited nuclear arms race and the need to return to the negotiating table after a "decent interval"—and the British government's Prime Minister had at first described the continental allies as "bloody wet", but the Foreign Secretary, being an experienced professional, soon attempted to develop a platform for negotiation even on the unpromising subject of Afghanistan.

THE CRISIS, THEN, has given a new topical importance to the long-standing controversy on whether the practice of negotiating with the adversary and more particularly the effort to limit the arms race by agreements are a principal source of Western weakness or are a necessary means to control a conflict that could blow up the earth.

In favour of the former view, I have frequently heard it argued in the United States that it is not possible to convince the electorate of a great democracy at one and the same time that arms limitation agreements are a vital contribution to its security and that the effort to maintain a balance of strength by arming *within* those agreements is still needed. My experience in West Germany has taught me the contrary. In the decade since the inauguration of *Ostpolitik*, the *Bundeswehr* has, by common consent of Allied experts, not fallen back in its strength and modernisation; and the task of getting necessary funds approved and necessary soldiers enlisted (against the opposition of the radical Left) has become easier rather than more difficult compared, say, with the period of the Viet Nam war. For all the present weaknesses of American society, I cannot see why it should not be possible to get the American electorate to understand the need *both* for negotiation and for strength—provided its leaders tell it frankly that negotiation is not a magic device to end the conflict with Soviet power, but that negotiation and strength are complementary means to avoid a nuclear war despite that continuing conflict.

In that sense, *Détente* may indeed be a continuation of the Cold War by different means—but the difference of means may decide the survival of mankind.

In the course of the current year, meanwhile, the Soviet attitude has undergone a limited but perceptible change. Under the influence not so much of the rather ineffective American "punitive" gestures, but rather of the persistence of NATO plans for the stationing of medium-range US missiles in Western Europe and of the American preparations for a greater mobile military presence in the region surrounding the Persian Gulf, overconfident arrogance has given way to a measure of worry and to a renewed interest in resuming negotiations on the limitation of armaments. The most tangible expression of that change is the new Soviet offer, made during Chancellor Schmidt's Moscow visit (and since repeated), to enter negotiations with the United States on the limitation of the medium-range, "Euro-strategic" missiles of both sides. No longer was the rescinding of the NATO decision or a moratorium on the production of the new American missiles a precondition—with the

[3] Widespread reports that the West German government was considering such a moratorium of production were shown up as the nonsense they were by the stand taken by Chancellor Helmut Schmidt during his Moscow visit in June. To those who knew Schmidt's role in initiating the NATO project, their absurdity had been obvious from the start.

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proviso, however, that the negotiations must also include the already-existing American "Forward Based Systems" capable of hitting the Soviet Union, and that if any agreements were to be reached, they should only enter into force after the ratification of SALT II. It is obvious that such negotiations are likely to prove difficult, complicated, and hence protracted. But it seems clear that the offer signals a revival of Soviet interest in nuclear arms control. At the same time, the Carter administration's decision to enter preparatory talks for such negotiations signals its willingness to contribute to the search for a way out of the dangerous international deadlock. But nobody can at present foresee whether that willingness will still be shared by the administration emerging from the forthcoming Presidential elections.

The American Choice

IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, the future of East-West relations—and with it much of the future of mankind—may depend to a large extent on the outlook of the future American leaders, hence on the decision of the American electorate. It will not be a simple decision as to whether "Uncle Sam" should "play it again"[4] in the sense of resuming the policies of the early period of the Cold War. Then the United States first had a nuclear monopoly and later, for a long time, an uncontested nuclear superiority. Now American vulnerability has come to be equal in principle, if not necessarily in precise degree, to Soviet vulnerability; and it has come to stay. Nor have the United States, which in 1950 by themselves furnished half the industrial output of the world, today the unlimited resources for an unlimited arms race to restore "superiority." Their resources are greater than Soviet resources; but they are limited enough to force them to make a clear and sometimes bitter choice of priorities. The US cannot afford to engage simultaneously in the vital build-up of medium-range missiles and greater mobile conventional forces *and* in an unlimited competition in numbers of strategic nuclear weapons which are both the politically least useful and the most risk-laden weapons of all. Whoever believes that a return to American quantitative nuclear superiority of the old type requires just an "act of will", ignores the serious limitations of an American economy plagued by inflation and stagnant or declining productivity. The fact that Soviet economic limitations are far more serious is compensated for by the greater freedom of the Soviet rulers to force, whenever they deem it necessary, the pace of armaments at the expense of the needs of the masses of their subjects.

Yet the humiliations of American power—the events in Iran no less than the Soviet and Soviet-guided aggressions in Africa and Asia—have provoked a chauvinistic wave among large sections of the American people to whom the slogan of "restoring American superiority" sounds attractive. But that wave of emotion is hollow; it represents no inner strength of will, no readiness for the corresponding effort and sacrifice. There are no signs of a broad-based willingness to accept the draft; or taxes big enough to finance a massive increase in armaments all round; or serious energy-saving measures. Indeed the choice of a Republican Presidential candidate, with no experience and little knowledge of international affairs, appears to be an adequate expression of the wave he is riding. Denying as he does the need for hard choices and committing himself to a host of incompatible policies at once—for instance, to a vast all-round increase in armaments and to reduced taxation, or to resuming diplomatic relations with Taiwan while maintaining them with Communist China—he might well end up by doing very little of it all; but he might also be just consistent enough to destroy whatever chances exist of overcoming the present international crisis.

IT WILL BE OBVIOUS to the reader that from the viewpoint I have developed in these pages the alternative of a return of the present incumbent can hardly appear very promising either. But his faults—of moralising emotionalism impairing the steadfastness of his policy, and of lack of congressional experience impairing the effectiveness of his domestic leadership—are bound to weigh less in the view of America's European allies than the seriousness of his ultimate commitment to keeping the forms of the East-West conflict under control even while working to re-establish the shattered balance. President Carter and his advisers—the most "hawkish" as well as the most "dovish"—know that the times of an American superiority amounting to invulnerability are gone and will not return, and that the preservation of freedom and peace in these conditions requires *both* a balance of strength *and* a dialogue with the powerful and dangerous adversary. That view is compatible with the basic attitude of the West European governments and peoples, hence with continued American leadership of the Atlantic alliance—however imperfectly it may be exercised, and however grudgingly it may be accepted at particular times. The commitment of the United States to a fundamentally different view might well destroy the alliance, before contributing to destroying our world.

[4] Cf. Leopold Labedz, "Play it Again, Uncle Sam!", ENCOUNTER, March 1980.

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Michael Howard

Surviving a Protest

A Reply to E. P. Thompson's Polemic

LAST JANUARY I succumbed to what Evelyn Waugh once so accurately described as "the senile itch to write to *The Times*." The temptation had been provided by a spasmodic correspondence about three issues that were being considered in isolation and ought, in my view, to be looked at together. These were: Civil Defence, the installation of "cruise-missiles" in the United Kingdom, and the continued possession by this country of a "Strategic Nuclear Deterrent."

In that letter (which was printed on 30 January), I suggested that the installation of cruise-missiles in this country might lead to their sites being targeted by the Russians for pre-emptive attack with weapons whose destructiveness, though appalling, would yet be on too local and limited a scale to warrant the retaliatory use of our own strike-force—since this would provoke a massive "city-busting" counter-stroke by the Russians in return. If we were to accept cruise-missiles, I suggested, we should also do what we could to protect our civil population; not only as a precaution against such attacks but because without such evident protection the use of these weapons would be incredible. "Limited" Soviet nuclear strikes might also be launched with the object of creating conditions of such "political turbulence" in this country that the retaliatory use of our nuclear weapons would be incredible as well.

The letter was intended to express scepticism about the utility of both cruise-missiles and our strategic deterrent, and was generally so read. But evidently I said both too much and not enough. In the first place I took for granted the general awareness that the presence of nuclear-equipped aircraft in this country, together with a number of vital NATO command headquarters and communication systems, has made these islands a target for Soviet attack for the past 30 years. Cruise-missiles are only a greatly improved version of the manned systems with which we have lived for an entire generation, and their capacity for rapid dispersal makes them very much less vulnerable to pre-emption than the manned aircraft they replace, though this would not deter the Russians from making the attempt to destroy them in place. What is new, however—and this I should also have pointed out—is the Soviet capacity for selective and accurate targeting: in itself a reflection of and riposte to the development of Western technology. This development, a transformation almost as revolutionary as that brought about by nuclear weapons themselves, has equipped both sides with a far greater capacity to destroy each other's weapons instead of simply eliminating their populations. In these circumstances, protection of populations is possible in a way that 25 years ago it was not. And if it is possible then it ought in my view to be done.

I REPORT THIS in a fairly neutral way, but since neutrality on such issues can be deceptive I should obviously make clear my conviction that this is a most sinister and undesirable development. It may have to be accepted as a fact of life, but it makes the prospect of nuclear war none the less nightmarish for making it appear marginally more possible. Rashly I took it for granted that this was too obvious to need to be stated. Quite how rash I had been I did not realise for three months—until April, in fact, when the historian and polemicist E. P. Thompson published under the auspices of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament a pamphlet entitled *Protest and Survive*, devoted entirely to an onslaught on my letter and to the truly monstrous motives that Mr Thompson attributed to me in writing it.

According to Mr Thompson my intention was "to hurry the British people across a threshold of mental expectation, so that they may be prepared,

WE WILL *be continuing this discussion of "Weapons & Peace" which Professor Michael Howard's critique of E. P. Thompson's neo-Disarmament Campaign introduces. Readers are referred to a previous critique of E. P. Thompson's political attitudes by Leszek Kolakowski, "My Correct Views on Everything"* in ENCOUNTER, *June 1975.*

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not for 'deterrence', but for actual nuclear war." My arguments, he said, were

> "*designed* [my italics] . . . to carry us across a threshold from the *unthinkable* (the theory of deterrence, founded upon the assumption that it *must* work) to the *thinkable* (the theory that nuclear war may happen, and may be imminent, and, with cunning tactics and proper preparations, might end in 'victory'.
>
> More than this, the arguments are of an order which permit the mind to progress from the unthinkable to the thinkable *without thinking*—without confronting the arguments, their consequences or probable conclusions, and indeed without knowing that any threshold has been crossed. . . .
>
> Professor Howard himself has certainly thought the problems through. His letter was a direct political intervention. He called upon the British authorities to rush us all, unthinkingly, across this thought-gap. His language . . . reveals a direct intention to act in political ways upon the mind of the people, in order to enforce a posture, not of defence, but of menace."

The object which I, together with the "high strategists of NATO" had in mind, according to Mr Thompson, was to create a "war psychosis", in which the idea of a threat from without would be reinforced by a threat from within;

> "and it is necessary to inflame these new expectations by raising voluntary defence corps, auxiliary services, digging ever deeper bunkers for the personnel of the State, distributing leaflets, holding lectures in halls and churches, laying down two weeks supplies of emergency rations, promoting in the private sector the manufacture of Whitelaw Shelters and radiation-proof 'Imperm' blinds and patent anti-Fall-Out pastilles. . . . And it is also necessary to supplement all this by beating up an internal civil-war or class-war psychosis, by unmasking traitors, by threatening journalists under the Official Secrets Act, by tampering with juries and tapping telephones, and generally by closing up people's minds and mouths."

All this I read with understandably mixed feelings. First there was the alarm felt by anyone who suddenly finds himself matched against the polemical equivalent of Bjorn Borg on the Centre Court. Once this ebbed it was replaced by gratification that I was now assured of immortality. Like Mr Robert Montgomery, whose execrable verse will never be forgotten so long as men still read Macaulay's Essays, so will I be preserved for posterity as the dim Professor plucked from deserved obscurity to be transfixed with a single contemptuous shaft by the formidable Thompson; whose works, like those of his exemplars Paine and Cobbett, will certainly be printed as masterpieces of polemical prose long after my own works (including this one) have been deservedly forgotten. But stronger than either emotion was my blank astonishment that a brief letter in which I was trying to think through some problems that perplexed and still desperately perplex me should have been seen as a cunningly designed move in a deep-laid conspiracy to fasten the shackles of despotism yet more firmly upon the free-born "People of England", to whom Mr Thompson's pamphlet was addressed.

These reflections were interrupted by phone calls from enthusiastic entrepreneurs anxious to arrange a "confrontation" between Mr Thompson and myself, on television, in Oxford Town Hall, or anywhere else. But I did not see what the confrontation was going to be about. I was, and remain, deeply sceptical about the utility of cruise-missiles, though I cannot see why they are *morally* more objectionable than less discriminating weapons. I regard civil defence—as do the Swedes, the Swiss, and the Russians themselves—as no more than a sensible precaution in a highly dangerous world. I asked the CND for the opportunity to make all this clear in print. But the request was brusquely refused. So I asked Mr Thompson to come and explain his ideas more fully in the relatively calm atmosphere of an Oxford seminar, which he very kindly did. When I pointed out to him my own lack of enthusiasm for cruise-missiles he made a most generous apology for having treated me unjustly; an apology which he later printed in the correspondence columns of *The Guardian* (4 August). There the matter rests happily between us. But since Mr Thompson also invited me to give my own objection to cruise-missiles "a more public airing" I have accepted the hospitality of these columns in order to take the question a little further.

I QUITE REALISE that in his philippic against me Mr Thompson felt no more personal animus than a sniper feels against an unwary enemy soldier who wanders into his sights. So far as he was concerned I was one more representative of the Governmental forces, the Establishment, the Thing, that hydra-headed monster of power which was seeking, as it had always sought, to defraud the people of their rights and liberties and had now discovered in the creation of a "war psychosis" a new way to do it. *Why* I should have wanted to do this—*why* I should have composed with such malevolent skill a letter designed to carry the entire British people across so critical a mental threshold—remains unexplained. But Mr Thompson is in no doubt that the Establishment is out to get him and those who think like him.

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> "At the next international crisis (real or factitious) [he went on to warn us] that there will be a co-ordinated, univocal, 'civil defence' bombardment . . . with extreme precautions to prevent any dissenting voices from having more than the most marginal presence.

I am afraid that this is simply paranoia; and it is as pointless to ask a paranoid of the Left why "they" want to take away his liberties as it is to ask a paranoid of the Right why the Russians should want to conquer the world. If indeed I were a paranoid of the Right I would no doubt treat Mr Thompson's pamphlet exactly as he treated my letter. The terrifying statistics he deploys about the damage caused by even the most limited of nuclear strikes; the heart-rending account he gives of the suffering caused at Hiroshima (without mentioning the other significant fact that it was precisely the *absence* of any Japanese deterrent retaliatory capacity that made the infliction of such suffering possible); the effort he deploys in dissuading us from equipping ourselves with weapons whose capacity to inflict comparable damage on an adversary could deter such attacks on us; his urgent efforts to persuade the peoples of Western Europe to abandon nuclear weapons whether or not the Russians do the same: whose interests, I would ask, does this serve? Is not Mr Thompson an avowed Marxist? Is he not deliberately attempting simultaneously to disarm and to terrify "the People of England" (Mr Thompson's own phrase, incidentally: the Scots and the Welsh can look after themselves) into acquiescing in the ever-increasing extension of Soviet power? Is his pamphlet not in fact a direct political intervention, designed to hurry the British People, as I prefer to call them, unthinking across the threshold from a posture of defence to one of surrender?

FORTUNATELY I AM NOT a paranoid of the Right, and I do not regard Mr Thompson in the same sinister light as he clearly regards me. On the contrary, I believe him to be in exactly the same position as myself: desperately worried about the state of the world, casting about for some means to improve it, and lamenting that this proper concern prevents him from getting on with serious historical studies. But our search for a solution will not get very far if we believe that we are wrestling, not with an intractable but not insoluble problem of international politics, but with Forces of Evil that are out to get us. For these Forces of Evil are not located in Whitehall, or in Moscow, or in the Pentagon, or even in All Souls. If they are to be found anywhere it is in our own minds, and it is thence that they must be exorcised if we are to see the problems of the world clearly enough to be able to prescribe solutions that will make the situation better rather than worse. So while accepting Mr Thompson's apology I would only beg him in future to stop being silly; to cease attributing malignancy to those with whom he disagrees; and to try to discuss these matters in the adult fashion that their deep seriousness demands.

E. P. THOMPSON has come to strategic studies late in the day, so it is not surprising that his understanding of the rationale of cruise-missiles is rather confused. He sees them as a device foisted upon Europeans by "the hard men in the Pentagon", who wish to fight a limited nuclear war in Europe that would leave the United States intact. *Why* they should want to fight such a war, or indeed any war, remains unexplained. It is therefore necessary to take a few moments to consider how the proposal to deploy cruise-missiles actually originated, and to see how it is supposed to fit into the concept of "deterrence."

The basic "model" of nuclear deterrence is simple. Nuclear weapons enable the powers that possess them to threaten an adversary with the prospect of destruction on a nightmare scale. Since no assured means of defence against them has been devised, their use, or threatened use, has to be deterred by a comparable capability on the other side. This is supposed to create a "Balance of Terror" which effectively abolishes nuclear weapons as an instrument of policy. Like a gothic arch, their conflicting pressures create a zone of stability within which international political activity can be carried on as if they did not exist.

This simple doctrine, devised in the 1950s, was out-of-date almost before it was proclaimed. In the first place it assumed (as the French were quick to point out) that every State that aspired to independence should possess its own nuclear capability. If one does not accept such logic, a non-nuclear power threatened by a nuclear adversary needs the protection of a nuclear ally. But how can that ally be relied upon if it is itself vulnerable to nuclear attack? In the second place, it assumed that the nuclear delivery capability was itself invulnerable or could be made so. But as missile technology developed during the 1960s and '70s, this assumption became questionable in its turn. The maintenance of a "credible deterrent", i.e. one not vulnerable to a pre-emptive strike, has thus become increasingly difficult *technically*; and this, in its turn, has complicated the *political* difficulty of providing a credible nuclear guarantee to an ally. This is the problem which "the hard men in the Pentagon" have been trying to solve for the past 20-odd years.

EVEN IN THE DAYS of massive US nuclear

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superiority over the Soviet Union, Western Europe provided a hostage the problem of whose defence baffled the strategists. Given that Soviet superiority in "conventional" weapons could not be matched by the West Europeans, how could American nuclear superiority be harnessed to the defence of their continent once the Russians had developed the capacity to deter its use by a substantial retaliatory capability of their own? In the 1950s the US Army in Europe had introduced the idea that "battlefield" nuclear weapons might be used to replace "conventional" forces in a tactical role. But a few exercises revealed that civilian casualties would be on so horrendous a scale that the remedy would be a great deal worse than the disease; especially since the Russians could respond in kind. Technological refinements such as "the Neutron Bomb" only touched the fringes of the problem, and both Lord Mountbatten and Lord Zuckerman fought a gallant battle in and out of office against the doctrine that nuclear weapons, on however limited a scale, could be considered an "acceptable" means of conducting war. It was their remarks on this totally different problem, incidentally, that E. P. Thompson tore out of context to buttress his own case.

Nevertheless if our conventional defences are inadequate and "tactical" nuclear weapons are unusable, how is the problem of "deterrence" to be solved? Are other forms of "limited nuclear war" any more acceptable? This problem was first discussed by Robert McNamara and his associates in the Pentagon in the early 1960s; and the package of ideas known as "the McNamara Doctrine" included the possibility of targeting Soviet military installations ("counterforce") rather than civilian objectives ("counter-city", or "countervalue") in such a way as to give the Russians the greatest possible inducement, when they themselves retaliated, to avoid American civilian targets as well. It might then be possible (hoped McNamara) to preserve the credibility of nuclear deterrence without invoking total and immediate holocaust.

But there were two problems about the McNamara Doctrine. The first was the difficulty of making any real distinction between "counterforce" and "countervalue" targets that would be unmistakable during a political crisis. Under any conditions the "collateral damage" caused by a nuclear attack on military objectives would cause huge civilian casualties on a scale that could not be conceived of as "acceptable." In the second place, was not this "counterforce" strategy indistinguishable from a pre-emptive strategy designed to disarm the Russians and leave their cities as hostages? How could it be reconciled with the MAD doctrine, simultaneously being proclaimed by Mr McNamara, of "Mutually Assured Destruction"? Mr McNamara and his successor James Schlesinger tried to explain that the military objectives they had in mind to attack would not be Soviet missile-sites but "Other Military Targets." But any conviction their words may have carried was lost when the Americans initiated the deployment of MIRVs: the multiple, independently-targeted warheads that increased the American strike capability by a factor of upward of five. If any single innovation destabilised the balance of terror, it was this.[1]

THAT THE RUSSIANS would respond to the American challenge in kind was inevitable. Hence McNamara's initiation of Strategic Arms Limitation Talks to try to "put a cap" on a weapons race that would be at once destabilising and ruinously expensive. Inexorably, as the Russians drew first level and then ahead of the Americans in the number of their launchers (the Americans, however, retaining a comfortable lead in warheads), Soviet fears of an American pre-emptive strike were replaced by American fears of a Soviet pre-emptive strike; fears stoked up by such bodies as "The Committee on the Present Danger", whose perception of the Soviet Union bears a close family resemblance to Mr Thompson's image of the Pentagon. In the eyes of these pessimists a situation will soon arise, if it has not done so already, in which the Russians would be able by a single pre-emptive strike to "take out" every single American land-based missile. The enormous retaliatory power of the American sea-based missiles would be paralysed by the threat of further attack on American cities. So the President would have no alternative save meekly to "surrender." These arguments have recently been used to justify a further massive increase in US defence expenditure and force deployments, to which the Soviet Union will no doubt feel compelled to reply in kind.

EVEN IF ONE BELIEVES these fears to be absurdly exaggerated, the growing uncertainty about the central balance has inevitably reacted on the problem of European defence. It is a problem that "the hard men in the Pentagon" no doubt sincerely wish would go away. Life would be a great deal

[1] This doctrine was restated last August by President Carter in his Presidential directive 59. The presentation as something wholly novel of what has been the declaratory position of the United States for at least six years and their avowed aspiration for nearly twenty can only be attributed to crude and irresponsible electoral tactics; and it is regarded as such throughout the US administration.

Those who want a clear account of the evolution of the doctrine in its early years should read Lynn Davis, *Limited Nuclear Options* (Adelphi Paper No. 121, International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, 1976).

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simpler for them if they had only the protection of their own continent to worry about, and one wonders whether E. P. Thompson thinks they *enjoy* having to find the means to defend peoples who should have the wit and resources to do the job for themselves. Right-wing forces in the United States, powerfully and irresponsibly assisted by Dr Henry Kissinger, have been busy informing the Soviet Union that Russian nuclear superiority will soon be so great that no American nuclear guarantee to Western Europe is worth the paper it is written on. So given the continued and undeniable imbalance of conventional forces, what deterrent is there left against a Soviet attack on Western Europe—an attack that could be nuclear, or conventional, or both?

THIS IS WHERE the much misunderstood "theatre nuclear balance" comes in (a question quite different from the problem of "tactical nuclear war" to which Lord Zuckerman was addressing himself). The Soviet Union developed, early in the 1960s, Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles targeted on Western Europe, the SS4s and SS5s. They caused much concern to Western strategists even in those halcyon days of American nuclear superiority; and a whole succession of schemes was devised, including the famous "Multilateral Nuclear Force", to neutralise them. But they were immobile, inaccurate, and highly vulnerable to pre-emption by US strategic weapons. They have now been replaced by an improved model, the SS20s, which are not only mobile and MIRVed but reportedly highly accurate. Taken together with the so-called "Backfire" bomber, these present the Russians with the option, by attacking purely military targets—command headquarters, airfields and communication centres, in the UK as well as on the European Continent—of rendering Western Europe defenceless before the United States could do anything about it: leaving it to the Americans to decide whether they wished to respond to strikes against the Soviet Union that would bring inevitable devastation upon their own heads.

THIS IS THE PROBLEM that confronts "the hard men in the Pentagon"; and for E. P. Thompson to accuse them of planning to fight a "limited war" in Europe is to stand reason, logic, and history on its head. Their object is precisely to *prevent* such a war and to assuage the fears of Western Europeans that, confronted by a threat that did not extend to their own continent, the Americans would be effectively deterred from intervening. It is primarily to reassure the Europeans, to prevent them from seeking safety in either neutralism or in a further development of their own nuclear weapons, that the Pentagon has come up with the proposal to install in Western Europe missiles with a range and accuracy comparable to that of the SS20s: the Pershing II missiles, and the now-famous ground-launched cruise-missiles, the GLCMs.

The rationale for this seems a little confused. According to some these are "bargaining chips" and will not be installed if the Russians can be persuaded to eliminate their SS20s and Backfires in a further round of SALT talks. According to others, including our own British Secretary for Defence, their installation has now been irreversibly decided. I am myself as sceptical about the whole programme as I was about the MLF proposal some 16 years ago. In the first place these missiles will remain under American control, and any damage they inflict on the Soviet Union (and however precise their targeting, the extent of that damage will be appalling) will be seen as having been inflicted by Americans. The probability of retaliation against the United States would be no less than if the missiles had been based on American soil. Why, then, should their use be any more credible, in the eyes of the Europeans or the Russians, than that of weapons based on American soil? What additional guarantee do they offer?

THE AMERICANS HAVE ALREADY assigned to NATO a force of Poseidons, submarine-based missiles, to reinforce the "theatre nuclear balance." Two arguments have been advanced to indicate why they no longer serve this purpose. First, they are not visibly linked to Europe; and second, their accuracy is less than that of ground-based launchers, so they could not be used in a precise counterforce role. The first of these arguments is double-edged, to put it mildly. However much people may demand security, their reaction when weapons are actually installed in their backyards is always predictably ambiguous, as the Americans themselves found when they tried to install Anti-Ballistic Missiles to protect their cities. The old Polaris sales-jingle expresses a profound political truth:

> *Put the missile out to sea,*
> *Where the real-estate is free,*
> *And it's far away from me. . . .*

Not even E. P. Thompson has ever raised any objection to the Poseidons. And as for their inaccuracy, why should this matter? These are presumably second-strike, retaliatory weapons, intended not for a surprise attack on SS20 sites (which are mobile anyway) but as a deterrent whose known capacity for inflicting punitive damage will dissuade the Kremlin from initiating the use of its own weapons at all. What indeed

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would be the value of such improved accuracy, the Russians are bound to ask, except for a pre-emptive attack? So far from stabilising the "theatre balance", in fact, the GLCMs could introduce a new element of instability. On this point E. P. Thompson and I are in entire agreement; and I would wish him well in his campaign if he were to dissociate himself from its unilateral and neutralist overtones and provide convincing evidence of a comparable effort on the part of the Soviet peoples to dismantle the no less provocative and destabilising SS20s.

WHY SHOULD "the hard men in the Pentagon" have taken this initiative at all?

The answer is, I believe, because they are not nearly hard enough. In fact they are as soft as butter, anxious to make provision for every remote eventuality, however implausible, that their over-active imaginations can visualise. Lord Salisbury, contemplating the British military in the 19th century preparing to defend India against an attack from Russia whose nearest railhead was still 1,000 miles away, commented that if they had their way they would garrison the moon against an attack from Mars. If the men in the Pentagon were as hard as they are painted they would have sent the "Committee on the Present Danger" packing long ago with the comment that, if they really believed that the Russians would risk a surprise attack against American land-based missiles on the assumption that it would be 100% successful and that there would be no retaliation from the enormous and intact submarine force, then they would believe anything. In the same way they would have dismissed the fears of their European allies. If we truly believe that the United States would watch the military and political elimination of an area where they have stationed hundreds of thousands of troops with all their families, hundreds of their best aircraft and tanks, masses of military equipment including tactical nuclear weapons, to say nothing of a huge investment of capital and God knows how many American citizens resident or in constant transit—if all this is not enough, what difference will cruise-missiles make? If they were as hard as E. P. Thompson apparently believes, they would long ago have told us to stop whining about "decoupling" and begging them for reassurance, and instead get on with the job of providing for ourselves that level of *conventional* defence that our combined wealth, man-power and technical expertise would make possible if we set our minds to it—and if, I would add in parenthesis so far as Britain is concerned, we did not divert funds into procuring the most expensive available "independent deterrent", the strategic rationale for which remains to me utterly obscure.

From this you will see why I consider both GLCMs and Trident to be a waste of money. The existing degree of American commitment to Europe—far more indeed than we have any right to expect from an ally in peacetime—combined with the formidable force of Poseidons at SACEUR's disposal should be ample to dissuade the Soviets from launching a nuclear strike against us. If it is not, nothing will be. Whether it would deter a quick *conventional* attack, however, is another matter. If the Russians ever came to think that they could reach the Rhine in 24 hours and the Channel in 48 before the question of using nuclear weapons arose at all, then peace might really be in the balance. This is the problem to which the West Europeans should be addressing themselves—not fussing about American nuclear guarantees.

E. P. THOMPSON's own solution to the problem of European security is apparently to create, by popular pressure, a Non-Nuclear Zone from Poland to the Atlantic. He claims considerable support in Eastern Europe, which is hardly surprising. The East Europeans have no nuclear weapons, nor are the Russians likely to allow them to acquire any. Mr Thompson will find much official enthusiasm for his cause in, for example, Prague. The Soviet Union itself, he admits, presents a more difficult problem, but it might, he believes, be shamed into following suit "by Rumania or Poland . . . distancing themselves from Soviet strategies." That is all he has to say about the Russians, and even he might admit, on reflection, that it leaves something to be desired.

Mr Thompson's implication is, however, that if we in Western Europe have no nuclear weapons, the Russians will not threaten us with theirs; and that, in the event of a nuclear war, we should remain an oasis of peace and calm—an oasis so secure that we need not even take the precautions for the defence of our civilian population adopted long ago by those professional neutrals, the Swedes and the Swiss. Indeed even to entertain the idea of taking such precautions would apparently, in Mr Thompson's view, invite attack.

E. P. Thompson leaves a lot of questions unanswered. Does he want the Americans to withdraw the Poseidons they have assigned to NATO? Is he happy about the level of conventional defence? Should Britain remain in the alliance at all, and if so on what terms? If we leave, should we take as our model France, Sweden, or Switzerland (all of them, incidentally, very heavily armed States)? Does he believe that the West as a whole should unilaterally abandon nuclear weapons, or that we should press on with negotiations for multilateral disarmament? And if we do so, can he suggest how we solve some of the major problems of balancing force reduc-

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tions and verification that have baffled statesmen for the past 20 years?

I HOPE I have made it clear that there is much in what E. P. Thompson says with which I agree, so I would be genuinely interested to know his views on these questions. During the past two decades the arms race has acquired a momentum fuelled by scientific ingenuity, by bureaucratic inertia, by inter-service rivalries in the USA and by the worst-case analysis of the military planners on both sides, that has made a mockery of arms-control negotiations. We badly need new initiatives and new ideas. The introduction of Ground-Launched Cruise Missiles is unnecessary, expensive, and most unlikely to stabilise a balance which is in my view far more stable than either E. P. Thompson or "the hard men in the Pentagon" believe. But in principle there is nothing about the GLCMs that is particularly sinister or particularly new. They will not increase the danger in which this country already stands as a member of the alliance. (And in so far as I ever suggested that it would I was wrong, I apologise and I withdraw.) The argument of E. P. Thompson and his colleagues that GLCMs are in some sense more *immoral* than an earlier generation of nuclear weapons because they are more accurate and can be targeted against military rather than civilian objectives is one that I must admit myself quite unable to follow; as is the associated suggestion that, unlike their predecessors, they are intended not for *deterrence* but for *use*. All weapons, especially nuclear weapons, are intended for *deterrence*. Their purpose is to persuade an adversary that he can gain nothing by using force—even defensive force—as an instrument of his policy. But if they are not known to be usable, how can they deter? Much as I deplore their introduction, I can see that the object they are intended to serve, so far from fighting a "limited nuclear war" in Europe (something which, like Lord Zuckerman, I have regarded for 25 years as being wholly impossible), is to make it clear to the Russians that they have no prospect of getting away with anything of the kind.

ON FUNDAMENTAL MATTERS I am afraid that E. P. Thompson and I are unlikely ever to agree, because obviously we argue from such very different premises. Mr Thompson belongs to the tradition of Tom Paine and Jeremy Bentham. He clearly believes that wars are caused by the forces of the Establishment for their own short-sighted and self-interested purposes, and that if only the People would rise in its majesty and shout STOP! then wars would cease in all the world. Peoples must therefore unite against Establishments. My own view, on the other hand, is that international conflict is an ineluctable product of diversity of interests, perceptions, and cultures; that armed conflict is immanent in any international system; but that war can and must be averted by patience, empathy, prudence and the hard, tedious, detailed work of inconspicuous statesmanship—qualities which are notably absent from populist movements whose univeral characteristic is a desire for the instant and total satisfaction of their demands. The appalling consequences of failure in the nuclear age make the exercise of these prudential qualities more vital than ever before. Romantic gestures will do nothing to help.

This difference between us is probably too deeply rooted in personality-traits and experience to be resolved, so there is little point in continuing the argument. I would not claim a unique degree of insight denied to so distinguished a historian as E. P. Thompson, and so honourable and honest a man. What I do claim, however, is that my views accord a great deal more closely with those of the Marxist-Leninists who direct the destinies of the Soviet Union than do his; and this is a matter of some relevance.

E. P. Thompson belongs to the golden years of the Second International, but the world moved on long ago into the leaden era of the Third. The present rulers of the USSR are avowed disciples of Lenin, who was an avowed disciple of Clausewitz. They are as frank in preaching and practising the use of military force as a legitimate instrument of socialist or communist policy as they are prudent in using it when the results are unlikely to be effective. In their very extensive writings on military strategy one searches in vain for a distinction between "deterrence" and "war-fighting", that threshold by which E. P. Thompson sets such store. They do not even recognise a qualitative distinction between nuclear and conventional weapons. And their prudence extends, as E. P. Thompson somehow failed to remind his readers, to measures of civil defence far more sweeping than those which he took me to task for suggesting that we should adopt over here.

For the Soviet leadership, Western Europe presents a twofold threat. Politically, the attractiveness of our pluralistic system and the (comparatively) successful economy that goes with it is a standing challenge to her dominance over Eastern Europe, if not to her own internal régime. Militarily, we provide a base for American weapons targeted on her homeland. The elimination of these, as Mr Thompson advocates, would certainly ease the military difficulties of the Soviet Union. But unless the Europeans replaced them with comparable systems of their own (and neither the French nor the British weapons are comparable) the Soviet Union would then possess a crushing military

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superiority, both nuclear and conventional, over her rich, weak, and divided neighbours. And can Mr Thompson seriously contend that this would not gradually develop into a political dominance?

I DO NOT MYSELF BELIEVE in "the lessons of history", and I have learned to mistrust historical analogy as a lazy substitute for analytic thought. But there are certain recurrent patterns of power and of imperial expansion in the past that have been too persistent to be ignored. I know of few occasions when small, wealthy and militarily weak states, involved in political rivalry with large and powerful neighbours on their frontiers, have retained their autonomy for very long. The fears of a nuclear holocaust that E. P. Thompson and his associates have been so sedulous in stoking up, fears which if they had their way would be entirely one-sided, would in the event of a confrontation provide an overwhelming incentive for us to see things the Russian way: to abstain from causing them internal or external embarrassment; to provide them with trade on highly advantageous conditions; to accept (as does Eastern Europe) their hegemonial leadership; and, not least, to eliminate those elements in our political systems that they found disturbing, as they have eliminated those in Eastern Europe. Foremost among such elements would be such courageous, old-fashioned, stubbornly independent radicals as E. P. Thompson himself, and that would be a great pity. Our task is in fact to preserve the independence of a political system in which it is possible for E. P. Thompson—unlike his opposite numbers in the Soviet Union—to Protest and still Survive.

In Loco Parentis

Young bored eyes scan the tongue of dead men,
the chained repetition of parts of speech.
Dead to his own language,
his eyes turn up in focused imprecation,
the grudged refrain rises, falls, rises again.
The pained abstract keening over the wasting hours.
Detached from life, meaning's choked;
his door's slammed tight.

Something carries, but to me, not him;
and not the *Aeneid*, its hell and love in cinders,
not Catullus on the rack of sex (*odi*, yes, *odi*),
not Tacitus displaying his purple figures
with brilliant futures behind them.

These are the pallid echoes whose real sound
is the dispiriting fricative hiss of 1940s gas
in its smashed china towers,
a Scots voice with a worn rasp
intoning the paradigm of the verb "to rule",
the bass beat of her ruler on wood and knuckle,
treble voices chanting high in the passive voice
rectus ero—ah yes, "I shall have been ruled",
the future made perfect.

And the dead, deadened sounds carry still
through the closed doors: it's rules
and rulers and ruling that survive the best.
The old speech at length unfurls its meanings,
to me but not to him; that imperious tongue's
laid down its laws at last.
As yet my son can both love and hate,
and does not know he does not yet
need *odi et amo*.

Rodney Pybus

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Wolfgang Leonhard

Are We Moving Towards a Post-Communist Era?

The Soviet Empire in Crisis

NOT UNLIKE all the Empires of the past, the vast Soviet imperium is inevitably facing troubling pressures for change from the peripheries. It is no secret that the decline and fall of the Roman Empire set in from the outer frontiers to the inner centre. In the last analysis what is decisive is whether the central power base is involved. Certainly at the moment the fundamental need for change and reconstruction within the *bloc* of Eastern Europe is dramatically obvious, and I am convinced that the general pressure is relevant to the Soviet Union as well. Let me outline six basic forces for change.

1. The bureaucratic centralised economic system makes rapid economic development quite impossible. It could be said that this strait-jacket of central state planning had its origins in the primitive conditions of the 1920s, in the Bolshevik hurry to industrialise ruthlessly by means of Marxist "primitive accumulation." But at least since the end of the 1950s it has become, in an irony of Marx's theory, "a fetter on the productive process." All-important details of growth and expansion cannot be effectively dealt with: in the USSR there are some 55 economic ministerial empires for each individual industrial branch, with every factory director receiving 16 detailed plans for the year, accompanied by on the average some 3,000 detailed directives from above.

WOLFGANG LEONHARD *teaches Soviet history and Communist theory at Yale University. Born in Vienna in 1921, he grew up in the Soviet Union where his parents (both prominent German Communists) took refuge from the Nazis in 1935. From 1942–43 he was trained at the Comintern School, and in 1945 returned to Berlin as a young political commissar on the staff of Walter Ulbricht. After working for the Central Committee of the East German Communist Party, and teaching at the Party's Karl Marx School, his opposition to Stalinism led to his flight to the West in 1949. For the past 30 years he has been one of the leading Sovietologists. Among his books are the best-selling "Child of the Revolution" (1957), "The Kremlin since Stalin" (1962), and "Three Faces of Marxism" (1974) and "Euro-Communism" (1979).*

2. The economic system which prevails is blocking the introduction of new technology, not because of some vague spiritual intellectual or specific technical deficiency, but simply because the way in which things are set up and are functioning makes it impossible to insert new technological elements easily or speedily into production. My own estimate is that it roughly takes about four or five times longer than in the West. Thus, it is a "structural" fault of the system when it continues to lag behind in electronics, computers, and petrochemicals.

3. The USSR is plagued by its "nationalities." At present the relationship is: 51% Russians, 49% non-Russians (and of these the overwhelming majority are opposed to becoming "Russified"). The policy of Russification is, however, being pursued, and more and more popular opposition to it is evident. The strongest resistance is, most observers would agree, in the Baltic area, with the Latvians, Estonians and Lithuanians in the forefront, and (of course) the Ukraine; substantial too are the Caucasian oppositional pressures, especially in Georgia and Armenia. Quite at the other end of the scale—although, since Afghanistan, this is changing—is the conformity or quietude of the five Central Asian Soviet republics of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, and Tadzhikistan.

4. The ideology is in decline. There was a time, as I know from personal experience, when the official ideological theses were taken very seriously by millions and constituted some kind of driving emotional force. Since the death of Stalin this is less and less the case. In the first post-Stalinist decade, from 1953 to 1964 when the so-called Khrushchevian "de-Stalinisation" took place, the crumbling of ideas and sentiments became glaring. Khrushchev himself was perhaps the last of the "true believers" in the USSR, and his was an attempt to divert the process by combining a critique of the Stalinist past with some kind of grand vision of the all-Communist future. He was not without a measure of success. Since his fall in October 1964 there has been such a disintegration of the official ideology that it is not too much to

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speak of a spiritual-psychological vacuum. Western scholars have searched far and wide and found "not a single Marxist in the land." No one believes anything any more. Signs of the "vacuum" can be found in the phenomena of civic resignation, rising alcoholism, and signs here and there of a search for "alternatives" (essentially in nationalist or conservative traditions). I have seen letters which record how people, old and young, are on the move, travelling hundreds of kilometres to visit some old fortress or ancient church. Some of this has to do with a new religiosity, and I do not mean the piety of the aged grandmother from Sagorsk but rather the theological bent of the educated young and indeed the offspring of Party functionaries.

5. A "social question" has broken through in the last decade or so, and it involves such troubles as these: a profound sense of discontent among broad sectors of consumers in the one-sided concentration on heavy industry, and the consequent neglect of supplies of goods for the shops. A glance at the international "league tables" leads to the aggressive question: How much longer must we in the USSR be in first or second place when it comes to Iron, Coal, Steel and Cement—and 25th when it comes to consumer goods? Aggressive too are the mumbles and grumbles against the privileges of the Soviet "new class" which lives and behaves in a style which reminds one of Bourgeois-Capitalist élites of generations ago. All this has contributed to the emergence of a new awareness—a "raised consciousness", if you will—of the working class, not only in Poland (as the drastic summer events of Gdansk showed) but in the USSR as well. Beginning in 1920 the peasantry began to move into industry, and we are now well into the third proletarian generation: the generation which, as we know from the history of the working class in the West, proceeds to establish independent trade-union organisations and an associated Social Democratic party. We seem to have got this far within the Soviet Empire: workers have become more confident, a little more prepared to do something on behalf of their rights. Even in Russia there have been repeated attempts to establish forms of workers' associations free of state control. But all such leaders have been arrested, imprisoned, sent to psychiatric clinics, etc. One doubts whether this can be considered an effective approach to the problem in the long run.

6. There are signs of degeneration in the ranks of the governmental and Party apparatus (which is of course connected with my fourth point on the decline of ideology). As belief fades and the psychological vacuum expands, the system produces more and more corruption, cynicism, black-market barter-dealing, egoism, careerism, and the like. I have heard the expression among Moscow intellectuals: the Party is nothing but an establishment of job-holders. . . . Let me add quickly that I am the last who would want to be guilty of underestimating the force and cohesion which the powerful apparatus of the Soviet Union can present; but it is, I am persuaded, only a shadow of its former mighty self. It remains formidable, but within its body politic are debilitating forces. No observer of Soviet wheeling-and-dealing from Leningrad to Odessa can fail to note that things can get done in Russia by means of corruption which was almost unthinkable a generation or two ago.

I SHOULD LIKE to go on and record a number of other factors which may play a role in some possible "Decline and Fall" but which are only in the earliest stages of emergence.

1. The technical intelligentsia (economists, scientists, engineers, *et al.*). These elements will contribute to the ranks of the Half-reformers, less out of political than technical reasons, to make the economy "more efficient", to reduce cumbersome over-centralised controls. Some of these would be "Sakharovites"; some would like some kind of "Prague Spring"; most would opt for "half reforms."

2. The artistic intelligentsia. It is well known that

A Thought

WHEN *the newly nominated Pope Woityla made his great speech from St Peter's Square in Rome, leaving no doubt about his intention to preach the Gospel to the whole world, to East and West, he raised his powerful voice to say: "Leaders of the world, open the doors to Jesus." I must confess that, on hearing these words from the man who had so unexpectedly come from inside the communist bloc, I said to myself: today we are witnessing the beginning of the end of the Soviet Empire.*

It was perhaps a silly thought to have, since the paths of history are full of mysteries and accidents, and it is too early to say that the walls of Jericho are now beginning to crumble. But one could not but remember that day in Rome, and the Pope's words, when seeing the new leader of the Polish working class kneeling in the open during a Mass in front of the Gdansk shipyards, near an image of Woityla.

Who can doubt that the old leaders in the Kremlin may have the same forebodings about what is going to happen now in Poland and Eastern Europe?

Arrigo Levi
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in THE TIMES *(London)*

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writers and even poets have a far more political (and "moral") role to play than their counterparts in Western societies, and are therefore to be taken rather more seriously. Many will be wanting to move towards some "liberalisation" of the rules of total censorship, also giving the arts a little more space in which to live and perform. At least a few will be taking a more thoroughgoing Sakharov approach to the opening up of totalitarian society.

3. The non-Russian nationalities. In such literature as I have seen there is relatively little "anti-Russian" emphasis. The point is always being made that there is no objection to Russians as such, only to their policy of Russianisation; and indeed to the extent that the Russians also object to the system's policies they would form a common front.

4. The industrial working class. With its growing confidence it will (as I have already noted) be coming to the fore in the movement for social reforms.

5. The fifth factor is indeed a small minority. although our attention has been justly focused on their political views and personal tragedies: the Dissidents. I would estimate that there are about 8–10,000 activists, and certainly alone they will not be changing the Soviet Union; but under certain conceivable circumstances they would provide the points of "crystallisation", even "coordination", for the various trends towards change and disaffection: the half-reformers of the Establishment, the non-Russian nationalists, the workers and would-be trade-unionists, the sceptical specialists. (And this much must be added: how disappointed, even bitter, so many of them are at the paltry treatment they have been receiving at the hands of the West's trade-union and church leaders whose faces seem to be turned in another direction.)

IN ADDITION TO this array of objective forces and personal groupings which are making for change and reforms within the Soviet Empire, there is one additional factor which endangers the old traditional Bolshevik hegemony. It is simply not true, as one anti-communist thesis often contends, that Eastern Europe remains loyal merely because of the presence of overwhelming Red Army militarism (and its secret-police adjuncts). Up until fairly recently there was also an economic factor of control. Moscow was in a position to fulfil all needs of raw materials, including crude oil, while the East European economies produced finished products to be re-exported. This provided a kind of economic rationale and justification. But here too the wood-worms are at work in the beams, for the Soviet Union is no longer able to provide what it previously could and did, and the shortages are mounting. The consequent re-orientation has forced the East Europeans to turn to the world market for raw materials and their other economic needs. How far is it from a pragmatic and independent trade and financial policy to an independent economic programme and then to a general sense of growing independence? A far way perhaps, but each liberal journey begins with a first small step, from East to West; they may even have to stumble before they learn to walk.

I do not doubt that this is clearly seen everywhere in East European ruling circles, and I doubt even less that there are two schools of thought about the prospect involved. On the one hand, there are "the hard ones", and in the various Party discussions they represent the so-called Rumanian solution. That means: a strengthening of the dictatorship; no reforms; self-reliance (without Moscow); emphasis on national independence and sentimental ancient traditions. I suspect that the Rumanian Party programme is the only one in the world that begins with a reference to the Roman Empire, thus locating the origins of the present ruling party in a 2,000-year-old past. The other school—representing "the Half-reformers" or the economic modernisers within the Establishment itself—would like to see a rather different perspective ahead: decentralisation of the economy; radical dismantling of the central planning system (which is not to say abandonment of "planning"); re-introduction of an old Leninist principle of "material interest" (i.e. profitability of individual enterprises); a primary emphasis not on "plan-fulfilment" but on "capital gains", or the calculable surpluses within a "Socialist (if not a 'social') market-economy."

Of course this is all to be conceived of within terms of the general principle of Collectivism; still, there are already signs of wholesome ambiguity as certain *Kolkhoz* areas are "reorganised" in order to give special brigades their own special rights to land and property, even conceding to them real participatory roles in the decision-making process and a share in the rewards of success. And successful they appear to have been. Needless to say the opposition to these "experiments" is formidable; for if they were to go on, then something like 100,000 true and faithful *apparatchiks*, all proud of their promotions and titles and coloured ribbons and emblems, would suddenly become completely superfluous. Any such plans today lie under lock-and-key in desk drawers.

The economic reformers would, obviously, emphasise the consumers' sector above all; try to find ways and means to get their scientists and engineers to have a more effective say in the whole process of modernisation and rationalisation; attempt to get at least a professional public discussion going without the shackles of censorship and obligatory chorales (*all stand and repeat*) of propaganda slogans. Even the introduction of something like a referendum has been bruited about by reformers who are not dreaming of a "Prague

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WHATEVER THE differentiating political criteria may be, there is no recognizable sense in which they could be defined by "Left-Right" labels. If to loathe Soviet imperialism and to dream of Poland's national self-determination is to be "rightist", then almost all Poles are rightists; if to want independent workers' unions is to be "leftist", then the overwhelming majority is "left." So be it.

Independence and democracy being both fundamental and remote goals, beyond the reach of direct tactical means, the anti-totalitarian opposition movement is trying to operate within the existing political framework. Few people would deny, after all, that the Communist system, oppressive though it necessarily is, can be (depending on various circumstances) somewhat more or somewhat less oppressive and the unbearable pressure of Sovietization somewhat more or somewhat less heavy, and that these variations, familiar after 35 years of experience, are not a matter of indifference. Whatever can be done within this framework to enhance the hope for a sovereign democratic Poland, to combat Communist mendacity, to resist and to denounce aloud the repressions and the lawlessness, is not lost in terms of the fight for fundamental goals. In Poland and in all countries forcibly driven into the cage of the New World, the Sovietization process does not mean that people actually start believing in the absurdities of the state doctrine (this hopeless task has largely been given up). It means that people accept the oppressive status quo as an inescapable reality and resign themselves to their fate of being helpless and passive subjects of the police régime. The mental enslavement of the population is achieved not when people, or a substantial part of them, give credence to official ideology, but when they are plunged into hopelessness. To oppose this process is one of the crucial functions of the opposition.

THE WORD "OPPOSITION" is admittedly awkward, as it might suggest what the movement is not: organized bodies trying to take political power. Yet the word "dissidents" frequently used in the Western press is even more misleading. It suggests that the distinctive mark of those people is that they dissent from the officially binding ideological beliefs. But in this sense there are hardly any non-dissidents in Poland, considering the total collapse of those beliefs both in the society as a whole and in the party.

THE IDEOLOGICAL COLLAPSE *of Communism in Poland and all over the Soviet-dominated parts of Europe inevitably changed patterns of resistance.*

Marxist revisionism has virtually disappeared as a viable alternative (although its fading remnants can still be found in East Germany, Hungary or Czechoslovakia) and nobody any longer expects that new ideologically motivated forces might emerge within the party apparatus. To be sure, whenever serious social and economic tensions arise—and they are almost uninterruptedly with us—various cliques vying for power spring up among Party functionaries. In recent years, however, they have hardly ever tried to produce anything remotely resembling an alternative political programme. It is not totally impossible that some Party groups, faced with the appalling economic situation, will make attempts to come out with reform proposals.

Yet it is universally admitted, even among the moderate critics, that no serious economic improvement is likely without political changes granting society at least a substantial number of genuine self-governing rights and thus going far beyond what has ever been conceivable in the Communist world. No saviour from within the party can be expected to appear and delude society with vague promises of justice and order and be given credence. On the other hand, radical political changes are unlikely within the post-Yalta international agreements which are still valid and give the Soviets practically unrestricted freedom of action within their empire. Naturally enough, the feeling of having been sold out by the West breeds in Eastern Europe widespread frustration and hopelessness—the most reliable allies of Soviet expansionism.

THE SITUATION is perhaps less bleak, though, than such a one-sided description suggests. There are signs announcing serious cracks in the Holy Alliance of 1945. The standard way in which Western politicians used to explain away their appeasement policy—"nothing can change in the Soviet bloc unless it starts from Moscow"—becomes less, and not more credible. In fact there is nothing in the history of Empires to prove that their disintegration process cannot be given impulses from peripheries—and this is what is happening right now.

It is in the interests both of the West and of East European nations to speed up this process by peaceful means: peaceful, yet strategically clear. This implies encouraging the diversity and variety, both economic and political, within the Soviet area of domination, and contributing in any way possible to the struggle against Communist mendacity, the most powerful weapon of Sovietism.

Leszek Kolakowski

in SURVEY Magazine
(ed. Leopold Labedz)
Special double issue on Poland

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Spring" but only a limited liberalisation of the existing system.

THESE "RUSSIAN" IMPULSES are, with a few changes here and there, taken to be transferable to the situations obtaining in Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia. Again, on this level we are not dealing with liberals or with democrats, but rather with modern technocrats, wedded by their deepest instincts to the ideals of efficiency and clean function. I confess that these are not, personally, my ideal types; but surely they will prove to be better partners than the Established Old Guards of Honecker, Brezhnev, Gierek, Husak. Some of these technocrats would even be against the occupation of Afghanistan, if not out of moral or political consideration; Western computers are more important than Afghan hills and valleys.

Curiously, these Half-reformers have an almost unbelievably positive conception of the Western world, ironically enough more affirmative than Western realities would justify. The few such types I have talked to would, if they could speak openly and freely, be the honoured invited guests of chambers of commerce and employers' associations everywhere. Such enthusiasts for the Western system of getting things done are hard to find these days. Nobody over there bothers with matters like pollution or alienation or relative deprivation.

THE NEO-STALINISTS form the strongest rearguard resistance to any reform movement. They remain the hard ruthless men of the régime, demand open loyalty to the memory of Stalin (and try to get his name into all resolutions, greetings, anniversaries), advocate purges of all the unorthodox, insist on committees of vigilance, call for the breaking-off of dangerous cultural connections with the West and with "outsiders" altogether, call for the reduction of economic and commercial relationships. At the centre of their stony beliefs is the conviction: "For fifty years of Soviet power we have proceeded to industrialise without the help of the capitalists. Why do we need them now? . . ." In the place of East-West trade and the import of technological know-how (a Fiat factory here, a Krupp plant there) they want to put a hard course of working discipline and total control of labour power. Needless to say, they do not shy away from an expansion of the old labour-camp system. Strong as they remain in the apparatus of Party and Government, they are also supported, in almost grotesque fashion, by a strange "Stalin-nostalgia" amongst the population at large. When some evening in a local cinema the figure of Stalin appears on the screen, about half the audience applauds, a few hiss, the rest remain fearful.

No doubt about it, the neo-Stalinists will have a powerful word to say in the discussions over the post-Brezhnev succession. But for a number of reasons I tend to the view that they will not be able to win out against the forces of half-reform and economic modernisation. I do not believe one can in the 1980s simply reimpose the primitive old ways and means of the 1930s. More than that, it is quite clear that the neo-Stalinist methods are even less suitable for the solution of pressing Soviet problems than the current course of fumbles and stumbles. Nevertheless, it would be naive to think that a provisional expansion of their power in the coming period is out of the question, although I see in the long run the coming to power of new men with different ideas. And it is these who will emerge as partners for the West in any new era of world-political negotiations. In a period of disintegrating *Détente* one can see how the advocates of the German *Ostpolitik* got their cast of characters wrong. How often have I heard during the last eight years—and the same message was passed on to every Western politician and journalist in confidential whispers!—that Brezhnev is the man with whom we must negotiate, because out there in the shadows behind him lurk the dangerous neo-Stalinists, waiting for their chance. Make concessions now—it is in our best interest. I have rejected this argument, believing as I do that only some future leadership in Moscow would be prepared to negotiate properly, usefully.

THE PROBLEM of the succession is the key factor in Soviet developments, and remains for me the decisive aspect of the future of *Détente, Ostpolitik*, and all the rest. Its earnestness is compounded by the geriatric element: never before in Soviet history was the average age of the fourteen powerful men of the Politburo so high as it is at present: over 70. Of these "the group of Four" (perhaps only the Chinese would dare call them a "gang" or "band") offer the following birthday picture: Brezhnev 73, Kosygin 76, Suslov 78, Kirilenko 73. What is one to make of an article in *Pravda* in which the last-mentioned, the key man in Soviet home front policy, goes on about the problems of leaders "in the middle period of life"? No, it is not merely a question of who is to succeed Brezhnev; for whatever the propaganda, the laws of physiology cannot be repealed and we will have to deal with the successors to all four in the next few years. This is a very special and indeed unique situation in the Kremlin.

Unique, too, is the curious situation that no successors "loom"; that there is no clear campaign to build up the next Leader. Of the names that are mentioned, Constantin Chernenko (67) has the handicap of first having come to public notice in 1978 and is felt to be a newcomer; as an outspoken

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Brezhnev man he will have to face strong opposition from several sides on the day after the state funeral. Yuri Andropov, who is chief of Soviet state security, would appear to be the most able personality in the élite. Indeed he has cleverly succeeded in giving the general impression that he is not so "dark" a figure as being a KGB-boss would lead one to suspect; still, it will not be an easy transition to move from the headquarters of the secret police to the general-secretariat. Victor Grischin, the Moscow Party secretary (65), is despite his colourlessness considered to have the best chance of making the running.

I TRUST I AM NOT giving the impression of over-emphasising the personal elements, for a rule of Bolshevik power-politics has it that if a strong man does not emerge at the centre then the contest goes on, with factional intrigue, until the new leadership has won the necessary authority. This new leadership will need opportunistic comrades, changing supporters, new allies—which leads one to hope that in this whole struggle for the succession a certain number of concessions and compromises will have to be made to the various forces I have described (economic, nationalities, culture), influencing future foreign policy and home-front directives. Nor are completely "irrational" factors to be excluded. But I remain persuaded that in the long run the modernisers will get the upper hand, and this leads me to the further hope that the West (including the powerful West Germans, most intimately engaged on the central front with the Soviet Empire) will one day soon be able to get a more reasonable *quid pro quo* in negotiations than has been the case with the present leadership.

AS FOR the Red Army, it is headed by the 71-year-old Dmitri Ustinov, who is less a soldier than an armaments expert. What one often overlooks is

The Limits of the "X-Factor"

Warsaw

PROBABLY the most memorable quote on Poland's two-month political and economic crisis came after the striking workers of Gdansk had wrung an agreement from the country's Communist leaders to usher in what they, the workers, believe will be a new era of liberalisation. Jacek Kuron, the dissident whose reliable information on the strikes played a significant part in making them so successful, was shrewd enough to say at the end that Poles now had to work to increase the area of freedom "up to the limits set by Soviet tanks."

These limits, said Kuron, could only be pushed back as workers organised themselves in other parts of Moscow's East European empire—and this was a question for the day after tomorrow.

THE AGEING, AILING *leadership in the Kremlin would have been grateful for that. At least it was a crumb of comfort, the only one, to know that even the Polish troublemakers were not expecting the Communist bloc to break up tomorrow, but what has happened in Poland this summer carries the warning to the Soviet Politburo that from now on it will become harder to keep control in Eastern Europe.*

For how else can any sentient human being see the strike in Gdansk, Szczecin, Silesia, Warsaw, Lublin and other major cities of People's Poland as anything else but a major victory of the working class over the (Communist) bosses?

It is worth recalling what the strikers won, at least on paper. The essentials were independent trade unions, the right to strike, a change in censorship legislation and a Government promise that the State-controlled media will now be available to the Church.

A host of specific standard-of-living and wage issues were also more or less approved but it was as clear in Warsaw as it was in Moscow that the agreements had more to do with freedom than with bread.

LOOKED AT *from the Kremlin the only alternative is having to "do an Afghanistan" or a Czechoslovakia. As it is, the Russians must have been sorely tempted to sort out Gierek's problems for him and remind the Poles about the lessons the Czechoslovaks learned in 1968, and have never forgotten.*

It is surely correct to assume that Soviet tank and air force marshals got out their contingency plans for intervention—for the third time in a decade—and brought them up to date, and secret instructions went to Soviet forces in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and East Germany, as well as in Poland.

YET IT MUST ALSO be assumed that it would have taken at least a million men and several tank divisions to carve up Poland, and, of course, it would have had to be done by the Soviet army alone because it would have added insult to injury to have used the East Germans (remember 1939!), while the Czechoslovaks are frightened even of their own shadows.

So it would have been Big Brother's solo show and because the fervently nationalistic Poles would have united once again, it would have had a long and bloody run. At the same time, it would have dealt the final blow to East-West détente, led to an uncontrolled arms race, threatened the credit and trade position of the entire Soviet bloc, and possibly even led to some internal trouble.

This is not to say that one day the Russians will not see fit to act. Involved is the X-factor, which none in the West can take into account because none really knows what happens when the Soviet Politburo meets to discuss a threat to its East European empire.

John Miller
in THE DAILY TELEGRAPH *(London)*

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that he commands a kind of "military-cultural complex", having (for example) extraordinary powers to vet all school-books used in the educational system, and thus functions as the guardian of patriotism and national morale. The Army is even in a position to convene conferences of writers and poets and lay down literary instructions. Doubtless the Army will play a major role in the succession crisis: though not, as some think, in order to have a Marshal as the *Vozhd*. That is the last thing they would want, since State power brings total responsibility and the danger of losing institutional authority. Not for the first time in authoritarian states are marshals and generals content to be king-makers behind the scenes, keeping things steady and throwing their influence against any radical experiments. I surmise that their strength will be pitted against the neo-Stalinists, since any glorification of old Stalin will alienate a vast civilian army of Gulag survivors and the relatives of millions of victims. On the other hand, the Army will, for all its technological needs, not allow too many reforms to upset the existing patterns of industrial enterprise. It is, in a word, a conservative establishment.

WHILE WE ARE STILL peering at the crystal ball for the shape of things to come, one should examine at least cursorily the signs for foreign policy.

As I see it, post-Maoist China will continue its independent course on the home front and play its own ingenious "Chinese card" in the game of world-politics by holding fast to the new Front (China, America, Western Europe, Japan). I doubt whether its resolute opposition to what they call "Soviet social imperialism" (the variation on the old Stalinist slogan against the Social Democrats who were called "social fascists") will be much affected by any changes within the USSR itself. A reorientation becomes possible, even necessary, only if the Front does not develop or hold together. They have been clearly disappointed in the dithering timidities (as they see them) of West European *Détente*, and if this were in the next years to turn to bitterness, then the feeling might well grow: "We offered those long-nosed idiots our support as an ally, and they turned away and proved unworthy—now let's show them what other Chinese cards there are to play. . . ." There are Chinese who would not be averse to "our own 23rd of August 1939 [the Hitler-Stalin Pact]." This strikes me as a most alarming prospect, a deadly danger, and for that reason I have advocated for years now the expansion and deepening of Western relations with China. This would be a recognition on the part of the West of the special characteristics of Chinese Communism—which is far from democracy and representative institutions, but is (in fundamental contrast to Soviet Communism) a peaceful, steadying, stabilising factor in world affairs, and has taken strong formal positions in favour of European unity, NATO and even "German reunification" (for the last Bismarckians are on the Yangtze, no longer on the Rhine).

I am very much concerned that the political contacts with China have been so dismally sparse; a few official state visits on the part of Western presidents and chancellors and ministers are not nearly enough. And Europe, if not out of timidity then out of confusion, has often been cool and unresponsive; the recent visit of Hua Guofeng in Bonn, for example, was an embarrassing fiasco. The West Germans, instead of acting as a sovereign state, and receiving him properly, anxiously shuffled him around lest he be seen and heard too much, constantly worried about what the Soviet Union might say the next day. Needless to recall that when Chairman Brezhnev came to the West German capital, the red carpet was rolled out all the way.

IF THERE is to be an era of "relaxation", of what the Germans call *Entspannung* as opposed to *Spannung* or tension, it must be associated with liberalisation. This does not mean any lessening of the various contacts between East or West, or any fewer meetings with the leaders of the Eastern European *bloc* of Soviet allies. But these must be arranged and conducted in a spirit of sensible realism, without the propagandistic touching-up PR which has been so demeaning; their systems are not so ultra-sensitive that they constantly need nice, kind, encouraging words from us. Above all, there must be no pressure of time-tables for the completion of this agreement or the signing of that treaty; and there must be no narrow psychology of *Erfolgszwang*, of needing-to-succeed. Of course, we must negotiate; but surely only when there is something to negotiate about, and there are clear signs that things can be moved forward; when this is not the case, there is nothing against breaking off useless bickering, nor is there anything wrong or immoral about taking a walk on occasion. Nor must one succumb to the illusion that negotiations must be steady, continuous, uninterrupted; pauses can indeed be refreshing. A period with no negotiations does not lead automatically to "Cold War", rather to a beneficial cooling-off when the heat of controversy keeps on rising disagreeably.

Nor is this all. In my view, all negotiations—especially the wheeling-and-dealing in commerce, finance, and general economic exchanges—must be associated with the firm expectation that the hard political aspects of the old tensions have to be eased. This is a proper and absolutely necessary "linkage", and has nothing to do with a horrific return to "Cold War." Indeed such a strategy of political-economic interconnections is for trained Soviet minds something completely normal; they

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expect it, are prepared to deal with it, assume that it is there (even when, given recent Western niceness, it isn't). Soviet theory and practice reckon with the political costs of economic advantages. Why not insist, after a particularly advantageous deal (US wheat for drought-ridden Russia, third-generation computers for new Siberian industrialisation), that there be absolutely no jamming of our Western broadcasting stations? Why not hold out for regular visits of scientific and cultural groups, contacts easily workable for the East European leaderships who are unhesitatingly prepared to strike bargains in order to fulfil their life-and-death needs? One need not add the caution that no negotiations should be put in the form of ultimata; but no one in the West should impugn the legitimacy of setting all new arrangements within the framework of a political concept: namely, liberalisation. I find the discussions nugatory which go on about "stabilisation" or "destabilisation." All world powers inevitably have a political presence, and no world politics should be conducted without general concepts and purposes.

The recent West European anxiety about an endangered peace—slipping mysteriously into war, as in Chancellor Schmidt's 1914 image; rousing the ferocious Russian bear, as in the nervous nightmares of the little countries (less in Vienna than in Amsterdam, less in Oslo than in Copenhagen)—has been stimulating a remarkable ultra-conservative psychology. A collapse of *Détente* "can only mean war"; so pretend for as long as one possibly can that things are quite normal. (The German Chancellor called off his summit meeting with the DDR's Erich Honecker only at the very last minute; the British Trade Union Congress still wanted to pay their official respects in Warsaw when the strike-ridden Gierek government cancelled the mission.) The West German ruling coalition of Social Democrats and Liberals, facing national elections, has been afraid of losing its investment in the official policy of *Ostpolitik*, which is presumably guaranteeing peace and quiet in our time; and it has consequently persuaded itself that all would be well if only nothing is done or said which could possibly contribute to fearful "destabilisation" anywhere in Eastern Europe. Stability presumably consists in helping them to keep all their horses locked in their stables. Nothing must move, otherwise "all is lost."

What has this to do with the liberal, conservative, and social democratic values which variously characterise the change-minded governments of the Western world? Why have we become so uncritically fixated on the ideal of "good relations" that we have inflicted a kind of political self-paralysis on our foreign policies and shared national values? If even the Marxists no longer think like Marx and Engels, why should we try to think like Metternich and Talleyrand? There are panicky moments in the current East-West dialogue when the exchanges are all among frightened Establishments.

A sound perspective for the 1980s calls for another way of looking at the major forces which are shaping the world conflict. The more democracy in a country, the better our relations will be. "Destabilisation" is a useless catchword, reflecting a narrow negativism. A true and useful formula is much more positive: changes and reforms, liberalisation and democratisation—these are the hopeful signs of stable relations between East and West, and of avoiding the dangers of war.

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Analysis of the Silence

This silence is lack of telephone-bells and traffic,
absence of feet through grass, or keels through waves,
the gagging of rumour, or radio-voice and static,

and presence of shrill wren-signals, gannet-dives—
their splash, emergence, wing-claps of self-applause—
and sighs of pale, bottleglass-green sea that heaves

its sandbank mattress over: small motors of bees
that hum low over the ground: furtive crumble of walls,
and secret mitosis of cells in leaves: far cries

of squealing terns, discordant as unoiled wheels,
above the deafening roar in the hub of the world's
invisible dynamo thundering here, that feels

like silence. But here, where deft gannets pin chiffon folds
of water-scarves, I can hear, under all, the terrific
engines. Here is the axletree that holds

the planet in place, and controls the unsleeping traffic.

Anna Adams

Beacons

Whose address was the corridors
of Europe, waiting for the summons
to be interrogated on their lack of guilt.

Their flesh was dough for the hot
ovens. Some of them rose
to the occasion. The nerves of some

were instruments on which the guards fingered
obscene music. Were there prayers
said? Did a god hear? Time heard

them, anticipating their requital.
Their wrong is an echo defying
acoustical law, increasing not fading.

Evil's crumbling anonymity
is at an end now. We recognise
it by the eternal phosphorus

of their bones, and make our way on
by that same light to the birth
of an innocence that is curled up in the will.

R. S. Thomas

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Tomas Venclova

The Shield of Achilles

To Joseph Brodsky

I speak alone that on the nerves' taut screen
I shall see clearly now, as once you used to,
The key lying there beside the empty ashtray,
These railings by the chapels built of stone.
You weren't wrong: all's just as it is here.
For now. Even the scope of the imagination.
The same descent of kilometres to the shore-line
Where still the sea

Hears both of us. Beneath the green leafed roof
Gleam, almost as before, the heavy lampshades.
The different tempi that impel the clock's hands
Are far more dangerous than the bitter wave
Between us. Moving far in space's grip
You grow as distant as the Greeks, as strange as
The Medeans. In shame we've stayed, we others,
On board this ship

Which is not safe, not even for the rats.
And if one looks well, then one realises:
This is no ship, but brick walls, bright roofs, troubles,
A date that all too frequently comes round—
In fact, maturity. This tutelage
Sinks into all our brains. Expanses,
Each day growing emptier, would have come to blind us,
If by the verge

Where, vertical, the rain hovers and roves
A solemn vault of sound had not arisen,
Almost annihilated in this sudden summer,
But giving us the blessed manacles
That probably coincide with, fit the soul—
Exalt and burn, defining outlines, forming,
Because our heaven and our *terra firma*
Are in voice, all.

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Peace be to you. To you and me, both, peace.
Let it be dark. And let the seconds hurtle.
Through densest space, that dream of many layers,
I read each character your pen's released.
Whole cities disappear. In nature's stead,
A white shield, counterweight to non-existence.
In its engraving both our different eras
Lie double-etched

(Were there but happiness and strength enough!)
As though in water. Or, put more precisely,
As though in emptiness. Waves beat the beach-head,
Disintegrate the mobile sketch. The squares
Of windows gleam with blackness. Late in dreams
The heated air seeps slowly through the glass panes.
Beyond the towers, a motor faintly rasping,
And into me

Roll day and hours. You see, between each chime,
The bell's blind swing inside its belfry.
Till the foundations answer its peal dully
There flows an endless interval of time.
The portals quiver, tautened by the beat,
And archway signals out to neighbouring archway,
And souls and continents call out to one another
In living night.

A dirty gloom enshrouds the sails, and sticks.
The sodden quay exhales a pungent vapour.
You see Thermopylae, having seen Troy earlier—
The shield is given to you. You are a rock.
The pillars set above this permanence
Impact the wind with their scintillant metal,
Although the rock, too, stands near sham and swindle
And wordlessness.

Entrusting to each one of us our fates
You cross now to the level of remembrance.
But every moment that exists, exists twice.
We are accompanied by a double light
Inside the ring that days, nights tighten more.
Low tide. On sand the ebb's pools glisten.
Boat, stone don't yet look different on the coastline,
The empty shore.

Translated from the Lithuanian by David McDuff

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Allen Curnow

A Passion for Travel

Absently the proof-reader corrects
the typesetter. According to copy
the word is exotic. He cancels
the literal r and writes an x.

A word replaces a word. Discrepant
signs, absurd similitudes
touch one another, couple promiscuously.
He doesn't need Schopenhauer

to tell him only exceptional intellects
at exceptional moments ever get any
nearer than that, and when they do
it gives them one hell of a fright.

He's exercised, minding his exes and ars.
If Eros laughs, as the other philosopher
says, and if either word's a world
"offering plentiful material for humour",

that's not in copy. After dark,
that's when the fun starts, there's a room
thick with globes, testers, bell-pulls,
rare fruits, painted and woven pictures,

pakeha thistles in the wrong forest,
at Palermo the palm lily *ti australis*
in the Botanical Gardens, Vincento
in white shorts trimming the red canoe

pulled the octopus inside out
like a sock, *Calamari!* The tall German
blonde wading beside, pudenda awash,
exquisitely shocked by a man's hands

doing so much so quickly,
Calamari! Those "crystalline"
aeolian shallows lap the anemone
which puckers the bikini, her delicacy.

Short of an exceptional moment, if only
just! In his make-do world a word
replaces a white vapour, the sky
heightens by a stroke of the pen.

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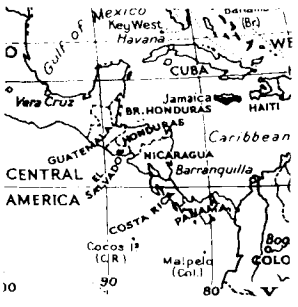
NOTES & TOPICS

European Diary

In a Cross-Fire

Paris



A CONTINUING Revolution in Nicaragua, daily slaughter in El Salvador, and an increasingly bloody deterioration in the internal struggles in Guatemala—all are the indications of *the new civil war* in Central America. Surely insurrections in Central America are caused mainly by abysmal poverty and ugly oppression—that's the conventional explanation which first springs to our minds. But it begins to seem rather less self-evident once the facts are examined. In recent years the standard of living has actually risen in El Salvador, and even more in Guatemala. El Salvador has seen the beginnings of an industrial take-off which has given rise to the celebrated "urban middle class" seen by the political scientists (and in Venezuela quite rightly) as a pre-condition of democracy. On the other hand, the coffee plantations which are El Salvador's chief agricultural resource remain in the hands of the "Fourteen Families" (some say sixteen), the oligarchy which is blamed for the poverty of a vast peasant proletariat. Nothing puzzling here.

But can this explanation be applied to Guatemala (a country where the coffee plantations which are of equal importance to the national economy belong instead to a host of small and medium landowners)? Furthermore, the Guatemalan economy is one of the very few which have seen a growth-rate of "pre-crisis" proportions (i.e. after the world crisis of 1973), with minimal inflation and very high wage rises. More than that, the spread of tourism and the promise of geological resources as yet barely explored justify the claim that Guatemala has the means to break loose from underdevelopment, and has already headed for a take-off. A reasonable standard of living is no longer a rarity there. The sharing out of the fruits of expansion is another matter, and indeed there the native Indians risk being left at the bottom of the list.

The fact remains that expansion is a reality. In some respects we are therefore witnessing "the Tocqueville effect", according to which it is not unrelieved hardship but the first symptoms of prosperity which spark the revolutionary powder-keg.

THE DIFFICULTY WITH Latin American events is that they are almost always recorded by blinkered observers. Some see in all the crises nothing but Russo-Cuban interventions; others the sinister ubiquitous hands of the Americans. Both schools overlook the self-inflicted damage which is sometimes the most serious of all. In the recent past of Guatemala, for instance, is there any episode more piously anathematised by the Left all over the world than the CIA's destabilisation of the "progressive" Jacobo Arbenz in 1954? That *coup d'état* was undeniably American-inspired and American-contrived. Except that you leave out half of the story if you fail to recall that Arbenz, betraying the spirit in which he was elected, had placed himself under Soviet control a short time before. *Without excusing the American reaction, that* switch by Arbenz at the height of the Cold War and at the zenith of American power was not exactly well advised and ought to be better remembered than it is today.

The repressive government in Guatemala is at present equally disliked both in Washington and Havana. But in order to comprehend the genesis of that bloody and deplorable situation, once again there is a side of the story which should not be forgotten. Keeping only to the very recent past, it was in 1975 that the guerrillas created or reconstituted their present partisan formations. The military resources available to them right from the start, the many brilliantly planned and executed attacks and kidnappings for which they could claim credit, and their successful large-scale actions against military targets (to the extent of executing the Army's commander-in-chief and occupying whole localities)—all this required a level of equipment and organisation which poor Indian peasants could hardly have achieved by themselves. It certainly takes a considerable feat of imagination to believe that in the space of a few months, even weeks, embassies could have been simultaneously or successively occupied in Mexico, Guatemala, San Salvador, Panama and Bogota—all by peasants acting on their own Rosa Luxemburgian spontaneous initiative.

In fact, in both El Salvador and Nicaragua, as well as in Guatemala, the Left opted for revolution and gambled on the "strategy of tension", excluding all "centrist" or Social Democratic solutions. The Sandinistas of Nicaragua, whose sympathisers

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originally denied their loyalties to the Soviet Union and to Castro's Cuba, no longer conceal their alliance today. Already—who still remembers the once-famous "salami technique"?—they have eliminated the ministers of the non-Communist Left from the ruling junta. This is no retroactive justification of Somoza; but after all politics goes on, and dangerously.

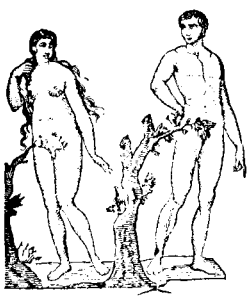
BY A STROKE of historical irony, the moment when the Castro régime has just sustained its most humiliating setback and lost face with Latin American public opinion by revealing the full scale of its social and economic failures is also the moment when Castro's disciples in Central America have succeeded in propagating a "Cuban model" in which no one in his senses could believe any more. And by a further historical irony, it was at the moment when the USA had finally decided to withdraw their support from the dictators of the old school that "death squads", more or less controlled by the Army, gave the guerrillas their macabre rejoinder. It is as if no one had learned the lesson of the fatal cycle of extremist full turns which has cost so much blood and ruination in Latin America.

Yet each time that peoples constantly sacrificed on the altar of violence and alternating excesses have been able to choose their leaders more or less freely in Latin America, they have done so quite realistically and with much common sense. Venezuela and Costa Rica proved this; and Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru have confirmed it. Must Central America be condemned to a descent into hell before it can some day gain the right to breathe again?

Jean-François Revel

Sharing the Guilt for Guilt

Copenhagen



IT WAS ALL profoundly instructive. Once again "the women of the world", or whoever the world's government officially recognised as their representatives, were meeting under the flag of the United Nations. I think that this time they were really out to get something called a Global Programme of Action in order to achieve nothing less than the equality of women everywhere (and not "merely political" but also economic and social equality). Denmark was not an inappropriate place to go about confronting something rotten in the state of the world and setting it right.

But before we knew it the sounds were old, familiar, and ringingly irrelevant. South Africa was condemned; so was Israel, and, at the same time, there was an upgrading in the status of those well-known friends of women terrorists, the PLO (represented by Leila Khaled who had already proved herself to be the equal of any male airplane hijacker). Ambiguity reared its ugly head. Was this supposed to mean that the status of women in Israel was benighted, and that enlightenment reigned among the Palestinians? The fact of the matter is, that apart from the occasional female front-person favoured by Arafat, "the PLO is strictly a man's club" (as *Newsweek* puts it in a current story).

It soon became clear that the meeting was not at all for women, of women, and by women, but was merely a kind of distaff copy of the power-political forces that dominate the United Nations Organisations these days, not essentially different from the cultural conferences, the sports conclaves or the scientific get-togethers which the UN majority organises in order to echo the keynotes of the General Assembly. I think it open to serious doubt whether the "mothers and sisters of the world" are all eager to follow the sterling example of Ms Khaled, all thoroughly persuaded by her reply to the straight question put to her on arrival in Copenhagen: "Are you a terrorist?" She said: "Terrorism is a funny word to use. . . . You see, for me it means: the exploitation of human beings." What she was trying to say was the old dialectical twister so favoured in many of our universities: terror is only what the terrorist is trying to liquidate. That is to say, when a PLO terrorist fights against Israel he or she becomes an *anti*-terrorist, for the enemy represents nothing but established institutionalised terror. *Newspeak* rules, OK?

MOST OF the UN committees—dealing with women's rights, or press freedom, or whatever—have this coherence about them: the "rich nations" are guilty, and anything that punishes them, or at

ERWIN K. SCHEUCH *is a Harvard-trained sociologist who now heads the Institute for Social Research at the University of Cologne. Professor Scheuch is the author of a number of books, including a study of the ideology of "Modern Anabaptists." He contributed an article to the February 1972* ENCOUNTER *entitled "A Youthful Legend."*

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the very least irritates their liberal conscience, is progressive. What the Afro-Asian ideologues call Socialism, a threadbare formula which can promise them half-development at best, leads them to a confrontation with the capitalist, imperialist, racist West. To criticise the "East", i.e. the white Europeans of a Communist half-continent, is clearly pointless, for they are themselves trying to catch up with—or to do in—the bourgeois West.

This gives a certain method to the madness. For the Third World to depend on "the East"—that is to say, the Second World—would only make matters worse; aid for economic development from that quarter is practically non-existent, except for some show dams and steel plants and "comradely solidarity" with guerrilla undergrounds. The most effective export of expertise has been in the field of police work and state security; and here the East Germans and the Czechs have done yeoman work in developing quickly and efficiently the Third World's repressive apparatus: secret agents have been trained, prisons reorganised, electronic bugging equipment installed. None of this can conceivably come under what the UN calls "Human Needs", although it urgently satisfies certain powerful necessities of small ruling minorities. So it is that both Germanies have had their roles to play, "from each according to their capacities": capital from the West, cops from the East.

BUT BACK TO Leila Khaled in Copenhagen, eloquent in her insistence that all help for hard-pressed Palestinian women be distributed through the good offices of the PLO which has been so busy pinpointing the real source of discrimination. She was applauded by the Indians who, one might have thought in a moment of bitter Western rectitude, should not have been there in the first place, unless support for the illiberal policies of Mrs Indira Gandhi is considered a species of feminism. But one mustn't be tempted by exclusivism or restrictive practices, otherwise the entrance standard of enlightened women's policies would have turned away most of Black Africa, except in so far as they came to indict the medieval and unspeakable practices still flourishing in their own unhappy lands. No documents were distributed, or resolutions passed, which dealt with the widespread clitorodectomies, not to mention Ethiopian fibulation, still inflicted on young girls of eligible age. No; "Zionism" was the problem.

I need not emphasise the wearisome fact that here, as almost everywhere else, a version of "partisan truth" is proliferating which used to be confined only to the Leninist-trained dialecticians of the Soviet world. More than that, it is not simply that "all the facts" are on one side and "nothing but lies" on the other; confident morality is also on one side, and nothing but a conscience-stricken bad faith on the other. With every pin-prick of the guilt-ridden souls of the West, the spiritual superiority of the Third World is fortified. True, they at times concede the motes in their own eyes, but these are only the left-overs from the vile optical practices of the old imperialist and neo-colonialist régimes. I have found it over the years quite useless to try and point out that most of European colonialism, held to be so culpable, is less than a century old, and for the most part hardly went beyond a few coastal ports and navigable rivers. Aid programmes—now being inflated into a massive redistribution of capital from the "over-developed" to the "under-developed"—are conveniently seen as a form of penance and compensation, what the Lutheran Germans like to think of as *Bussgeld,* morally motivated reparations. This is especially appealing to the intellectuals of lands which were scarcely involved in the "scramble for Empire" (like Sweden) or which never even had a single little colony (like Switzerland).

Thus, Eva Maria Bruchhaus, the representative of the West German Republic (established in 1949) made the following confession:

> "At least we must try and return to the women [of Black Africa] the self-confident independence which we once took away from them. For the women in parts of Asia as well as Africa were indeed once independent, having control of their own incomes, at a time when the bourgeois woman in Central Europe was still completely tied to house and family. . . ."

Frau Bruchhaus meant well, I suppose, even if she was a little short on sociological insight, deeming "income" a sure sign of independence, and running a family the opposite. Historical facts are unimportant; what matters is the broad outline of an ideological myth which holds that the poor women out there had it so much better until the evil Europeans came along to rob and enslave them. It is a cosmology which holds a whole world together, and gives the UN majority a transcendent faith.

I WOULD NOT WANT to disguise the shameful fact that we ourselves are guilty of this proliferating guilt-complex. Small groups of Western intellectuals have throughout our modern culture sought simple, powerful formulas to indict their own societies, to dig up the heaviest stones to hurl against their own glass houses. When, in 1885, the news arrived in England of the fall of Khartoum, and many thousands massacred, raped, tortured, and enslaved, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt recorded it gleefully in his diary and "could not help singing all the way down in the train." Less romantic souls were less sentimental; Marxists are rather more

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hard-headed. In 1921 Lenin addressed himself to Left-wing intellectuals with the following remark: "If you are so convinced that your world is so evil and calls for penance, then go forth and do penance. But please refrain from giving vent to your own penitential passions by tearing at my clothes and throwing ashes on my head. . . ." Lenin was not very strong in theology, but he had a liturgical point here for the young Protestant pastors of our own day.

Sharing the guilt for guilt are the Third World ideologies themselves, even if they are patchily stitched together from remnants of Marx and Lenin, Laski and Fanon, Tito and Nehru. What kind of person can represent these new nations volubly, respectably, safely? Only a few of the governments to be represented are actually totalitarian, but many are despotic and almost all of them are authoritarian. Which thoughtful delegate (and many of them have charm, wit, and knowledge) can afford the luxury of having a personal point of view, reflecting his or her own informed knowledge of realities? The official statements presented in New York and London and Copenhagen, or wherever, reflect loyally the sentiments of the home régime and the reigning *idées fixes* of the local semi-academic ideologues. (These, in turn, are an echo of an echo, as in the mental reverberations of US-educated Nkrumah and the Paris-Left-Bank-bred Ho Chi Minh. . . .)

Responsible too is the new sense of bureaucratic irresponsibility in world politics. What costs a resounding resolution on how best to exploit the depths of all the Seven Seas when one is even having trouble getting at the riches of one's own little clump of land? What consequences for an absolutist ultimatum to Israel or South Africa to cease and desist from anti-feminist practices which discriminate against women in factories and offices, on hospital staffs and academic faculties . . . when such situations are not even conceivable as a problem at home?

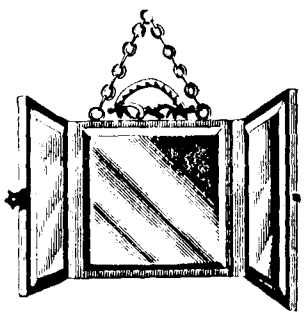
COPENHAGEN GAVE SIGNS that Third-Worldism will not continue to be a one-sided problem for the West, the First World, but will also more and more be embarrassing and irritating the East, the Second World, which has opportunistically encouraged its rhetorical outpourings and wild universal hectoring. Colour-conscious critics are beginning to detect a shade of hypocrisy in Fidel Castro's *café-au-lait* Politburo (Eldridge Cleaver, the Black Power exile, hated the race discrimination in Havana); and no women commissars are yet being mentioned among the possible successors to Chairman Brezhnev. At least in China Mme Mao, widowed but undeterred, was the acknowledged leader of the Gang of Four.

But a falling out between the Second and Third Worlds is not very far along. In Copenhagen a dissident feminist from Russia turned up in the conference hall. She was the 33-year-old Natalia Malakovskaya, and she tried to tell the assembled battlers for women's rights at the UN conference in the Bella Centre something about her own troubles on the Soviet scene. She didn't get very far; the police were called, and the lady intruder was promptly ejected.

Erwin K. Scheuch

The "Blunt Affair", Again

London



WHEN THE Annual General Meeting of the British Academy on 3 July decided to "pass on to the next item of the agenda", and thus not to vote on a motion which "deplored" the conduct of Professor Anthony Blunt, let alone on a Council resolution which recommended his expulsion, it was not saying either that art history matters more than loyalty or that excellence in scholarship compensates for breach of trust in matters affecting national security. Had it said the latter, it would not in fact have been saying anything different in principle from what is constantly urged in court by defending counsel and often accepted as valid by judges and magistrates in passing sentence. None the less, it did not say it. As for the other implication, that art history matters more than loyalty, the 120 Fellows who voted to "pass on to the next item of the agenda" included a number who regard

SIR KENNETH DOVER, *President of the British Academy and of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, was from 1955-1976 Professor of Greek at the University of St Andrews. His publications include "Commentaries on Thucydides" (1965, 1970), "Aristophanic Comedy" (1972), and "Greek Popular Morality in the Time of Plato and Aristotle" (1974); BBC Publications will shortly be publishing his study of "The Greeks", based on the televised series. His comments follow Professor Ian Christie's "A Confusion of Fellows"* (ENCOUNTER, *October).*

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loyalty as mattering infinitely more but nevertheless came to the conclusion (at least a week before the meeting, in some cases) that the Academy in formal convention, as distinct from individuals who happen to be Fellows, has no business whatever to express or imply any comparative evaluation of scholarly and non-scholarly activity.

Under Bye-law 11 of the Academy a Fellow may be expelled "on the ground that he or she is not a fit and proper person to be a Fellow." The expression "fit and proper" recurs in Bye-law 27, under which those who sponsor a candidate for election are required to certify "that he or she is a fit and proper person to be a Fellow of the Academy *in accordance with Article 6 of the Charter*" (my italics). Article 6 refers to "persons who have attained distinction in some one or more of the branches of scientific study which it is the object of the Academy to promote." Article 2 defines the object: "the promotion of the study of the moral and political sciences, including history, philosophy, law, politics and economics, archaeology and philology."

If it turned out that the scholarly distinction which had earned a Fellow election was illusory, founded on plagiarism, falsification of documents, or the like, there would be a clear and simple case for expulsion. If a Fellow who had truly merited election turned academic crook thereafter, the case would be—well, clear enough in principle.

IF IT IS REVEALED that a Fellow covertly transferred his allegiance to a totalitarian régime which restricts and penalises freedom of enquiry and freedom of expression in scholarship, there can be no possibility of complete agreement on whether he is a "fit and proper person." Some will say that he has frustrated the object for which the Academy exists—as indeed he has, incidentally and indirectly. Others will doubt whether such indirect and incidental action constitutes a betrayal of scholarship of the kind envisaged (in their view) by Bye-law 11. Legalistic pedantry? Narrow and cautious interpretation of the law may allow much wrong to go unrighted; but if strong feeling overrides the law, the way is open for the lynching gang.

SUPPOSE WE SAY that support for a totalitarian régime is an act so hostile to the Academy and damaging to scholarship that it merits penalty. A peculiarly awkward question then poses itself; why don't Western academies expel, or at least censure, those Fellows whose priorities are such that they have done harm to scholarship by openly excusing its totalitarian persecutors? There are some very strong reasons why we should not even contemplate such a thing, but I would not rate the difference between overt verbal support and covert practical support for totalitarian régimes as offering much of an answer to the question. Certainly deceit is wrong and candour is right, but no Western academy has ever elected Fellows for their moral virtues or expelled them for their vices. Is it suggested that we should now start on a purge of adulterers and bullies, censuring and expelling the proud, the mean and the callous? Who will be left at the end of the process? We can *choose* to regard covert transfer of allegiance as incomparably wicked and therefore as deserving treatment which will distinguish it from all other wrongdoing; but in recognising that we are making an arbitrary choice (and I don't use "arbitrary" as a derogatory term) we must necessarily recognise that others may choose differently.

Reading law reports, I have the impression that judges who hear appeals sometimes disagree radically and irreconcilably in their interpretation of the law's intention. That Fellows of the British Academy should disagree just as much in interpreting its Charter and Bye-laws is not surprising. What does call for explanation is the fact that the interpretation adopted by a narrow majority on Council was rejected by a three-to-one majority at the AGM (and the 1979/80 Council did not differ in age, seniority or any other distinctive feature from the average of the Fellowship).

One Fellow who voted to "pass on to the next item" has since told me that he took *I Corinthians 13* as his guide,[1] but did not "have the courage" to intervene in the discussion. No one else has put the issue to me in unambiguously religious terms, but in British academic discussions a reasonably sharp eye can sometimes discern a religious sub-structure beneath an argument expressed in wholly secular language. I don't think I heard the word "forgive" used by anyone at any time during discussion of "the Blunt affair", but I know perfectly well that some Fellows were conscious of a duty to believe a man (in default of positive evidence to the contrary) who says that he regrets doing what he did, and of a duty to forgive him. Since I do not myself profess any religious faith, I am hardly in a position to tell Christians what their duty is, and when I attempt to do so I usually find that half the Christians I know tell me I am wrong, while the other half agree with me. But no one needs to be a Christian to observe that any act of repudiation or retaliation loses its moral and emotional appeal as the weeks go by, especially when the conduct against which it is directed lies totally in the past. The interval of time between the crucial discussion on Council and the AGM was three-and-a-half months.

[1] "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. . . ."—ED. NOTE

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Of the 187 Fellows who were present at the AGM when the motion to pass on to the next item was put, 138 voted as they did, or abstained from voting, for reasons which I do not know. Extrapolation from the reasons of the remaining 49, combined with those of the 21 who did not attend the meeting but told me what they thought, is not a very reliable indication of what went on in most people's heads; there are differences between the arguments put forward at the meeting and those put forward since, and much has been said privately which has remained private. I have therefore presented what seem to me to be the most powerful considerations. If the decision of the AGM had been the opposite of what it was, I would have defended it just as confidently as I defend its actual decision. This is not because (as a lifelong admirer of Protagoras) I am ready to take either side in a debate (I don't care for artificial debates). Nor, in my view, is it a donnish teetering on the fence, enfeebled by an overdose of on-the-one-hand and on-the-other-hand. It is because, whereas hypothetical issues can always be made simple by paring them down until they are, real issues usually involve arbitrary choices and priorities, and "the Blunt affair" has involved them to a striking degree.

WHETHER ANYONE will ever be in a position to say with assurance what the general public thinks about it, I don't know. (I can't help hoping it won't believe that "tolerating the intolerable" ever appealed to more than one Fellow.) From the time when the *Sunday Telegraph* alerted its readers to the fact that Professor Blunt's expulsion was under discussion, plenty of ordinary members of the public, both in England and in Scotland, told me what they thought. I encouraged them to do so, because it was interesting. Every one of them, without a single exception, was firmly against expulsion. I dare say the experience of other Fellows has been different; my experience does not annul theirs—nor does theirs annul mine. Until late July, there was only one person among my personal friends outside the Academy who advocated any sort of action against Professor Blunt, and that was a professor. Since I began writing this article I have twice been interrupted by non-academic visitors. Both were interested to hear what I was doing, and both had strong views. One, an elderly art teacher, said, "The British Academy should have nothing—*nothing*—to do with politics." The other (a young woman who is a chartered accountant), astonished to hear what had been on the agenda of the AGM, exclaimed, "But surely—he'd *repented* !"

Kenneth Dover

Mauriac, between Province & Paris

Paris

FRANÇOIS MAURIAC called himself "a Catholic novelist", then later "a Catholic and novelist"—an important distinction. When he died ten years ago at the age of 85, he had achieved every kind of honour and success: elected to the French Academy when relatively young, and at the end a Nobel Prize-winner. The only thing lacking was his inclusion in the de luxe edition of the Pléiade classics, and his novels were recently accorded this honour. So Mauriac was at long last published by Gallimard—he had never become one of their authors despite his friendship with other writers on their list (André Gide, Paul Claudel, Marcel Proust).

The new biography of François Mauriac (published by Éditions du Seuil in large format, over 600 pp. long) is by Jean Lacouture, himself from Bordeaux, like the novelist. Lacouture is well known as a reporter, but he is also the author of two excellent biographies devoted to André Malraux and Léon Blum.

In comparison with Blum the politician and Malraux the author and man of action, François Mauriac is not an overtly "rewarding" subject. At least, not in the years of his earlier success when he led a fashionable life in Paris. But the themes change once he takes a stance on the war in Abyssinia, having been a conservative in keeping with family tradition, and then supports the Spanish Republic in the Civil War. He was no longer acceptable to the right-wing newspaper *Echo de Paris*; and even readers of *Le Figaro* (the newspaper to which he contributed most regularly) came to regard him as a "renegade." François Mauriac became an embattled chronicler of the Fourth Republic: he supported the "decoloniser" Pierre Mendès-France, and then Charles de Gaulle: it was an eventful period, rich in anecdotes.

Lacoutre also presents a revealing portrait of the childhood and youth of the author, who was born in 1885 and went to Paris in 1907. These early years constitute the relatively less well-known part of the novelist's life. His father died very young so Mauriac grew up "fatherless" like Sartre, like Camus. The family was well-to-do, and the social milieu drew him towards the Right, as it

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did his dearly loved brother Jean, who remained an arch-conservative to the day he died. When François Mauriac later wrote against Colonialism and Fascism, he was confronted with previous articles of his which sounded quite a different tone—after all, when he travelled to Rome with Prime Minister Pierre Laval he had been favourably impressed by Mussolini; and at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War he had leaned towards Franco.

Even before this political *volte-face*, Mauriac had alienated the conservative milieu from which he sprang—by means of his novels. These were dominated by themes of sex, greed, brutality, materialism, sin, and an absence of divine mercy. The outwardly imposing Christian family is here "a knot of vipers", and readers were warned against Mauriac's novels by the religious authorities. His admiration for Baudelaire, Rimbaud, and Claudel was shocking enough. He himself was shocked when he championed Paul Claudel in the Académie Française without success—some naval officer who wrote quite enjoyable adventure novels was preferred.

MAURIAC ONCE WROTE that the truth about an author's life is not to be found in memoirs and confessions, but in his novels. As a young man he had come into contact with the socially progressive Catholic movement "Le Sillon" ("The Furrow") and its founder Marc Sangnier, of whom the novelist wrote a cryptic and gently ironic portrait. Stronger at first was the influence of the aesthete and nationalist Maurice Barrès; he wrote a review praising Mauriac's first volume of poems and it immediately paved the way for the young author.

His biographer goes into few details about the novels themselves—he does not claim to be a literary critic. Yet the fact of the matter is that for almost 30 years novel-writing was Mauriac's real life, and any reader of the biography would wish for some additional material to aid his reflections on what it was about these novels that had such a controversial effect—and what gives them lasting value.

Lacouture adopts a different tack with the journalist, polemicist, moralist, and autobiographer. One cannot help concluding—and this is confirmed by a remark of Mauriac's—that it is principally this "late Mauriac" who will endure in the field of literature and in the history of the French intelligentsia. Unlike Jean-Paul Sartre, Mauriac never formulated a theory of political commitment. He became *engagé* almost unawares, as a result of things that angered or offended him—and his own indignation provoked his indignant readers, which made it all the more effective. The editor of *Le Figaro*, Pierre Brisson, kept faith with him for a long time. Not until the conflicts over the North African liberation movements was Mauriac obliged to cross the Champs Élysées to join *L'Express* further up the avenue, and there he published his weekly "*Notes-Bloc*."[1]

IT MAY BE THAT Mauriac was less important as a novelist than that other Catholic defector from Right to Left, Georges Bernanos—both of them, incidentally, motivated by an aversion to "respectability" and not by any sudden conversion to liberal-left convictions. But as a journalist Mauriac had a wider range—a subtle irony, which was foreign to the blustering Bernanos, a sly humour with suggestive malice, which ensured that he always had the laugh on his side. (When a Dominican took him to task for underrating the Surrealists, Mauriac retorted: "If this Father preaches Lautréamont to me, I'll take the liberty of preaching Jesus Christ to him.")

A controversy with Albert Camus in 1945 is still memorable. Camus, who had been active in the Resistance and was unable to get over the execution of some of his closest friends and fellow-combatants, took a hard line during the early post-War "purges" (in *Combat*, the newspaper he edited at the time). One argument concerned the writer Robert Brasillach, who had worked for the Paris collaboration newspaper *Je suis partout*, which specialised in denunciations. Mauriac, among others, had pleaded—unsuccessfully—that the death sentence should be commuted. Albert Camus later came to the conclusion that his own hard vindictive line had not been justified; he publicly declared that Mauriac had been in the right on that occasion. This self-criticism was also voiced in Camus' last novel, *La Chute*. Camus had had the vision of "a France purged clean" and had later seen this to be an illusion. It may be attributable to Mauriac's Catholic upbringing and mentality that he never believed in a "new-born" society in this sense; on the other hand, the kind of self-criticism practised by Camus is hardly conceivable in Mauriac.

The Mauriac of the novels and of the chronicles is one and the same—yet they seem two separate writers. The world of the novels is based on themes which Mauriac absorbed in his childhood; the articles and notes are based on an alert awareness of contemporary realities. The novels refer to a provincial milieu, the journalism to Paris.

AT ONE POINT Mauriac had a falling-out with the Editor of *L'Express*, Jean-Jacques Servan-

[1] See J. G. Weightman's remarks on Mauriac in his ENCOUNTER piece (January 1959), reprinted in *The Concept of the Avant-Garde* (Alcove Press, 1969).

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Schreiber, who compared De Gaulle to Mussolini, to Hitler, to Franco, and even called him *canaille*. In turn Mauriac labelled the ambitious journalist and politician a "*Kenedillon*", a little would-be Kennedy; and this label stuck.

One of Mauriac's last books glorified De Gaulle. Indeed the General also thought highly of Mauriac, but in a ceremonious rather than an intimate fashion. At their first meeting after France was liberated—during the Occupation Mauriac had managed to write a book under a pseudonym for an underground publishing house—De Gaulle chatted with him only about André Gide and how to get the old master elected to the *Académie Française*—by no means Mauriac's most urgent concern.

His last novel, *Un adolescent d'autrefois*, "*A Youth of Long Ago*", was written at the age of 83, and remains one of his most powerful, with an animal sensuality and joy of the chase reminiscent of Maupassant.

Jean Lacouture records that a trenchant review of Sartre's which appeared before the War—to the effect that Mauriac was not a *real* novelist since he didn't allow his characters room to breathe and simply manipulated them—hurt the novelist deeply and also influenced him profoundly. (Sartre later judged this criticism to be too harsh.) Wounding, too, was what André Gide once wrote, not without some spite: "I annoyed a lot of people when I said that noble sentiments make for bad literature. Your literature, my dear Mauriac, is first-rate. But if I was a better Christian—I would have difficulty in following it. . . ."

One of Mauriac's strengths was the openness with which he upheld bourgeois or middle-class values, property, tradition. When Sartre turned down the Nobel Prize, Mauriac confessed that he had difficulty in understanding the decision. "In my own case, the money was just what I needed at Malagar [the family property] for installing a new bathroom. . . ." (At least one reader regrets that Lacouture did not quote this revealing remark.)

In an ugly attack, Peyrefitte—the writer of scandalising novels, not to be confused with his cousin, the Minister—branded Mauriac a secret homosexual. In all matters relating to the erotic in the life of Mauriac, model husband and family man, Lacouture maintains a discreet reserve (Mauriac's widow and sons helped him while he was collecting material). The temptation of homosexuality is cautiously implied; there are allusions to various "leanings."

Indeed, this is the problem with the biography of a novelist which doesn't delve too deeply into either the works or the "private sphere", but sticks to the public data of a life and times. The reserve is commendable. But surely there is still scope for investigation into why this pious Catholic, with an apparently happy childhood, created a fictional world utterly lacking in divine mercy. In the non-fictional world of engaged views and committed convictions, what private experience was responsible for the honesty and acuteness which transcended all the usual narrow restrictions of ideology?

François Bondy

A Talk with Hans Hartung

Antibes

HE WAS ALWAYS something of a cosmopolitan wanderer, and even as a young art student in Dresden more than a half-century ago he was more often "abroad" than at home, above all in Paris. There he had his first contacts with Cubists and Surrealists, but not for long as he took off for Africa in the service of the Foreign Legion. In the course of World War II he fought (though nominally a German citizen) on the French side, losing a leg, getting a new passport, finally settling down in a Paris studio. The new school which he helped to establish was one of poetic "informality", far from strict linearity and recognisable shapes and forms, rather a calligraphic one of "gestures and signs." Today, at 76, his paintings are represented in most of the major museums of the world (prices ranging from ten to forty thousand pounds). Our conversation took place on his birthday in his house in the South of France. *W.K.*

—Most of the time, in recent years, you have been living and working in this lovely corner of the Cote d'Azur. Have you run away from the city?

HARTUNG: It's not a matter of flight, but of light. I need this bit of sun and land, and most of all the space. Our place in Paris is lovely but too small; since both my wife and I paint we actually need two studios, and nothing could be more appropriate than this coast of good hope, with its warmth and climate and greenery. It all makes, I imagine, for a certain lively optimism, resulting in a way in

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optimistic pictures, with nature playing a natural role in its associations and abstractions.

—A happy art? . . .

HARTUNG: No, not happy, but lively, and at least not melancholy. It would have all been so much more sad in a sadder environment. Even in angry moments one seems to be constructive. Which seems to be the case with all the artists who have been working here in the South. Think of Picasso, Braque, Matisse, or Tapiés—they are often tragic, but always with a positive note. Even if it has something of the desperate about it at times, it remains a life-affirming art.

—The "informality" appears to have a touch of liberation: was it a reaction against the horrors of the War?

HARTUNG: Even during the War I was painting in a "tachist" way. As a movement, of course, it all happened in the days after the end of the War, in those fresh winds and new currents, but not everything of the old was swept away, only the new flexibility took on different expressivity which nevertheless had its readable signs. When emotions spill over, in art as in music, then strict attention is no longer paid to forms and everything gets "out of joint." Think of how the late romantics lost their whole composure. Certain rules have to be followed even in the freest of forms. I am convinced that post-War art, with all its variety and extravagance, managed to maintain its countenance.

—Was the turn to the informal also a matter of artistic protest?

HARTUNG: I find all protest movements rather stupid. Of course some protests can help clear the air, even produce some good. But when one tries to create something out of motives of protest against something else, it turns out that both are pretty bad. The point of departure of the tachists can be compared to the *Bauhaus*, which was one-sided, rejecting everything that was around, sacrificing even the humane elements on the altar of new theory. Informality is in its way a counter-reaction. In my own case I wanted to do something new, and give abstract expression to every kind of emotion.

—This, then, is your artistic point of departure?

HARTUNG: In recent years the ideas of my work involved the notion that matter is no longer matter but rather a form of energy, and this is also true of our conceptions and moods. I have been trying to convey a plastic sense of feeling one's way into the themes of my own work. Once upon a time one could paint a face or a frog or a battle-scene, nowadays one must secure quite different subjects, different signs and symbols which come closer to recapturing human spirituality. Our *Bild-Plastik* is concerned with psychic, intellectual, and imaginative energies.

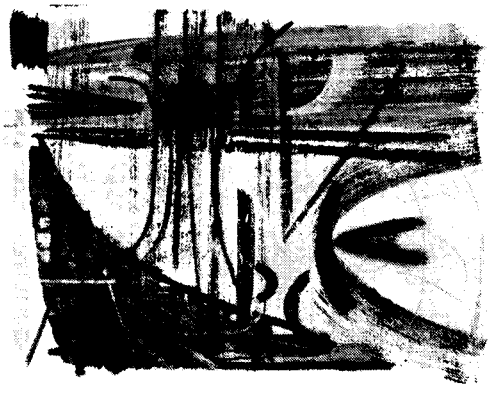
—How do you account for the fact that European art, following a period of almost complete American domination, has begun to command attention again? Is it to be ascribed to the painters or to the painting?

HARTUNG: It all depends on what you understand by American art. After all Mark Rothko and Hans Hoffman were not Americans, they were emigrants, and in that period there was an emigration of ideas and artists across the Atlantic. An American flowering followed, a great one, for everything in America takes on greater proportions. Instead of standing in front of an easel they ran around, and even over, the pictures, creating a great uproarious artistic showplace wherein it seemed as if the results were more substantial than those of artists on the old side of the Atlantic. I still have my doubts. I believe that Jackson Pollock has been over-rated.

But still, somebody like Rothko I value and indeed love. Alexander Calder too is a great creator. But on the whole the men of Action Painting did not create a primary art, they reacted against European achievements. Action Painting became important because of its enormous dimensions, its *Gigantomanie*, and even the subsequent American efforts are powerful in their proportions; all taken together they have had an influence on the Germans, the Swedes, the Dutch and the Danes. What the final consequences of it all will be. I am not at all clear.

—Was this influence at least fruitful?

HARTUNG: The influence was not good. It issued in a great vulgarity and an embarrassing realism,



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indeed to an adversary attitude to hateful things, always gigantically presented. That's not art for me—ugly women, fat men, God knows that they do exist, but is it absolutely necessary to paint them and preserve them for eternity? Take a look at the earlier cultures. What remains of their achievements is precisely the grand qualities of a people of culture, and we remain profoundly moved even today. I find this missing in the art of today.

—What qualities do you mean?

HARTUNG: Our present-day society does not have any great high-points, apart from the triumphs in the fields of the sciences. Everything is profit and greed, conflict, politics, and war, revolt and tyrannical violence. The world social order is not exactly admirable. . . .

In my own view the artist has to begin by trying to find a new personal ethic. One can't expect that from the whole of mankind, concerned as it is to keep body and soul together. Humanity's chances depend on artists, and on scientists. Nevertheless, the general problems of the individual psyche remain, for love is still love, and euphoria remains euphoric, and all these humane elements will always be a theme for artistic creation.

—Picasso once remarked that he did not search, he found. Could it be that a good picture is the result of sheer accident?

HARTUNG: That's taking it too far. In the old days, when I was young and poor, I was almost compelled to get a picture right. So I made a great many sketches, found myself drawing all the time. When I found something that seemed to be the right thing, then I went to work to realise what I sensed to be a successful idea. That's the way it used to be. Nowadays I mostly improvise. Directly in oils and on to large canvases. There are no sketches for the pictures. The end result develops as it all goes along, in the midst of the work. I allow myself to be led by my own efforts, even to be misled or seduced.

—But this is a very seductive part of the world, and aren't you sometimes tempted to enjoy it rather than to paint in it?

HARTUNG: It is quite nice to do nothing, but one must have a certain discipline. Perhaps one has to turn to a glass of good wine while working—a bit of high-spiritedness is always helpful. I have even tried more technical help: playing music while I paint, mostly baroque pieces which I find strict, beautiful, positive and euphoric. . . .

—May I ask with which artists you would be prepared to swap pictures?

HARTUNG: When I was young I used to buy some pictures occasionally. I purchased a Corinth, a Nolde, a Kokoschka. Later on I added a Picasso and a Soulages to the collection. But I would be very happy to swap some work with Braque, Chillida, and Mondrian. Also something by Rohlfs, from whom I once nearly had a painting but some dealer stepped in and put an end to it. In general I prefer art that differs from my own work.

—What birthday wishes do you have? After all you are now an artist with international recognition, with many official awards and honours and not a little affluence. . . .

HARTUNG: Only the best things in life: agreeable moods, good health, daily pleasures. As for my art—only that I can go on working for a long time yet, and that my fantasy should keep leading me on.

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Saddled with Ginger

Women, Men & Horses—By RUTH PADEL

PERHAPS ONE NOVEL aspect of the novel when it first appeared was the female voice saying "I." At first, of course, this was male fantasy. *Moll Flanders* (1722), advertised as

> The fortunes and misfortunes of the famous . . . born in Newgate . . . a life of continued variety . . . twelve times a whore, five times a wife (once to her own brother)

was a voice from the other side of epic identity, since from the *Odyssey* to *Crusoe* (1719) variety of experience was mainly encountered by the male literary "I." Moll's "experience" consists in remarkable encounters with men. Defoe explains how his fantasy-woman came to write as well as he:

> She is made to tell her tale in modester words than she told it at first.

He followed Moll with *Roxana* (1724), "The fortunate mistress . . . vast variety of fortunes. . .". and remarked that "the history of this beautiful lady is to speak for itself." Male novelists—as Moravia in his preface to *Woman of Rome*—explain and cover up for lack of realism in simulating a female "I." Women have no natural control of their "I"; their history and language ought to be shaped by men.

Richardson, a spiritual Frank Harris, was fascinated from early years by the inner female life:

> I was not more than thirteen, when three young women, unknown to each other, having a high opinion of my taciturnity, revealed to me their love-secrets, in order to induce me to give them copies to write after, or correct, for answers to their lover's letters: nor did any of them know that I was the secretary to the others.

Defoe's progression, from Crusoe to Moll, suggested that the female identity was the next most exotic place, after a desert island, for male imagination to adventure. Richardson confirmed this new landscape as the "novel's" natural sphere. *Pamela* (1740) and *Clarissa* (1748), though less obviously titillating than *Moll* or *Roxana*, state as clearly that as his male character's physical, so the male novelist's emotional, target is the interior of a woman.

The new form allowed real female voices to say "I" (and other things) in prose; but in offering a new territory to male imagination, it was apt also for pornographers. Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* ("*Fanny Hill*"), written in 1749, describes the central act repeatedly from the woman's view. *Justine* (1791) is not in autobiographical form, but the heroine, "a misfortunate woman . . . plaything of wickedness and debauchery" undergoes like Moll and Fanny a variety of experiences and male mishandling, and these are always described from her side only. Pornography's basic shape became a series of encounters, a progress from innocence to experience. Ill-written or repetitious though they mostly were, these works reflected some themes of the great contemporary novels in depicting male invasion of a woman's inner world and the pain this caused; and sometimes indicating the "real" i.e. spiritual, site of female identity or "virtue." *Pamela* is "Virtue Rewarded"; Clarissa loses her "virtue" under sedation and thereby confirms her real virtue; *Justine* is "The Misfortunes of Virtue", Tess is "A Pure Woman." Mrs Gaskell's *Ruth* (1853), Maggie Tulliver (*The Mill on the Floss*, 1860), Little Em'ly (*David Copperfield*, 1850), Lizzie Hexham (*Our Mutual Friend*, 1864) though she has a lucky escape, are likewise emotional, physical and social victims of male invasion; though the point of presenting their suffering in narrative differs from the intentions behind the writing of, for instance, *Rosa Fielding, or A Victim of Lust* (1867).

OTHER OF THE FAMOUS 19th-century novels were shaped by a *saeva indignatio* with the fact which pornography repeatedly corroborated, that "man"—i.e. society—had victims whose identity he and/or it failed to respect. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), *Jude* (1895), the Dickens children point to victims of male brutality as clearly as suffering heroines. But later in the century another

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genre was shaped by defiance of the pornographer's favourite cliché, that the object used had no identity except a spirit whose curbing confirms the male user in enjoyment of his mastery. The animal story began, it almost seems, as anti-porn; *Black Beauty* (1877), its great forerunner, reads almost as one of the great feminist texts. Anna Sewell couldn't (could she?) have read *Fanny Hill* or *Justine* or even *Rosa Fielding*. She was an invalid all her life and dedicated this, her only book, to her mother, hoping it would induce "kindness, sympathy and understanding of horses." But the shape she gave it, her language, and the variety of suffering her characters undergo reflect the patterns and recurrent themes of classic porn.

Sewell has two major characters, who share the load of experience. Black Beauty is the narrator, presumably a gelding. His "breaking-in" happens at the time he might have been gelded, and a painful conversation about docking horses' tails and puppies' ears ("the soft flap of their pretty little ears quite cut off") is a dramatic substitute for this event. Ginger, Beauty's friend, is a mare who suffers far more violent and degrading experiences. Between them, the two share exactly the type of beauty favoured by contemporary abused human heroines. Ruth, Tess, Maggie Tulliver (also Jo in *Little Women*, 1869) have soft, luxuriant, dark-to-auburn hair. So does Fanny:

> I was tall, yet not too tall for my age . . . barely turned fifteen . . . my shape perfectly straight, thin-waisted, and light and free . . . my hair was glossy auburn and as soft as silk flowing down my neck in natural buckles. . . . In short, all the points of beauty that are most universally in request, I had, or at least my vanity forbade me to appeal from the decision of our sovereign judges the men, who all, that I ever knew at least, gave it thus highly in my favour.

Black Beauty's description of his own appearance in youth is similarly seductive:

> I was now beginning to grow handsome; my coat had grown fine and soft, and was bright black. I had one white foot, and a pretty white star on my forehead. I was thought very handsome; my master would not sell me till I was four years old. . . . My coat was brushed every day till it shone like a rook's wing.

Ginger's beauty is the other ingredient of Fanny's or Tess's auburn hair. She is "a tall chestnut mare with a long handsome neck", and this is the beauty that is most ruined by male abuse:

> It was Ginger! But how changed! The beautifully arched and glossy neck was now straight, and lank and fallen in, the clean straight legs and delicate fetlocks were swelled.

The story lines in *Black Beauty* reflect those of classic pornography. They begin with the loss of a "good" home or family. Justine's good family dies off in penury and suicide (at which point, fearing corruption, she parts from her more cynical sister). Fanny's good family dies from the smallpox. Beauty has to be sold and leave his mother. He finds out later he did have a brother, whose death he had witnessed:

> So poor Rob Roy who was killed at the hunt was my brother! I did not wonder that my mother was so troubled. It seems that horses have no relations; at least, they never know each other after they are sold.

A similarly anchorless, unbacked identity is given to Justine, Fanny and Victorian pornographic heroines. But Beauty is lucky; he goes off to another "good home", Birtwick Hall, where he acquires his name. Here he meets Ginger, colleague in harness, equally "handsome" (much as the other inmates of Fanny's brothels all have their share of ideal beauty). This is the ideal home, which remains in the book as an Eden to which one must long to return. Beauty is reunited with some elements from it at the end; first with Ginger (dying in the London cab-rank) and finally with "little Joe", the stable boy at Birtwick Hall. Like Justine, Beauty loses his name through his experiences, until the *anagnorisis* in the last chapter:

> It *must* be Black Beauty! Why Beauty, Beauty! do you know me? little Joe Green that almost killed you?

Justine, before her execution, suddenly meets her sister again; and as with Beauty, it is the other person who recognises and renames the victim:

> "It's you, Justine . . . my dear sister . . . you!" she wailed. "Don't you know me? Don't you know your own sister, Juliet?"

WITHIN the story-structure Black Beauty, like Moll, Fanny and Justine, has a life of continual variety, a sequence of encounters with masters, bad and good, competent and incompetent, thoughtful and cruel. Like Fanny, he finds occasion for moral and professional comment on their expertise and character. The sequence starts with his "breaking-in"; defloration of the natural state. His own experience of this event is decent and gentle, yet

> those who have never had a bit in their mouths cannot think how it feels; a great piece of cold hard steel as thick as a man's finger to be pushed in one's mouth . . . but I knew my mother always wore one when she went out, and all horses did when they were grown up; and so, what with the nice oats, and what with my master's pats, kind words and gentle ways, I got to wear my bit. . . .

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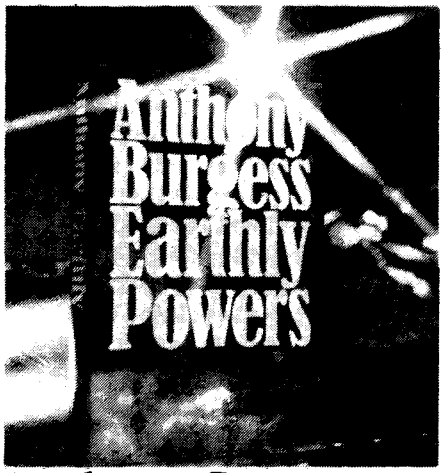

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Cleland's fantasies over female fear of "the bit" become a standard feature in Victorian pornography: doubts about

> accommodating that capital part of man . . . which does not appear . . . less than a wrist and at least three of my handfuls long.

But, just as Fanny is proud of her function once broken to it, Beauty enjoys it eventually:

> It certainly did feel queer; but I must say I felt rather proud to carry my master, and as he continued to ride me a little every day, I soon became accustomed to it.

Many of Fanny's subsequent encounters suggest a renewed breaking-in ("He was now fairly in for making me know my driver"), whereas Beauty's new experiences explore new moral rather than new physical dimensions of the interesting relationship with master.

"Breaking-in" provides, of course, more scope for sadistic fantasy than Beauty's first experience or Fanny's later enjoyment of "the old last act" might suggest. Ginger's defloration is the most painful scene of all:

> At last, after a terrible struggle, I threw him off backwards. I heard him fall heavily on the turf, and without looking behind me, I galloped off to the other end of the field; there I turned round and saw my persecutor slowly rising from the ground and going into the stable. I stood under an oak tree and watched, but no one came to catch me . . . flies swarmed round me, and settled on my bleeding flanks where the spurs had dug in. . . .

She hasn't Fanny's gift for self-preservation:

> I felt the weight of his body upon me, whilst I lay struggling with indignation . . . but he stopped short all of a sudden, and got off . . . breaking loose from him. I ran to the bell. . . .

Nor Fanny's lightness of touch, whom the maid finds on the floor with a nose-bleed, "which did not a little tragedize the scene." Fanny is gentled and put to bed by the maid; Ginger comforted by "a fine old gentleman" with a dish of bran, who wipes off the blood and breaks her in gently himself. The sadism behind Ginger's account is apparent also in her resemblance to Justine in "a ring of monks with an armful of rods" ("It's me who'll correct this beast for resisting you"). Ginger is caught, as a preliminary to her first encounter, by a gang of men:

> one . . . by the forelock, another by the nose, held it so tight I could hardly draw my breath; then another took my under jaw in his hard hand and wrenched my mouth open and so by force they got on the halter and the bar into my mouth; then one dragged me along by the halter, another flogging behind. . . .

Scene and imagery belong to standard contemporary pornography, in which flogging masquerades as "education." "So you see", as Beauty says, "this breaking-in is a great thing."

In Beauty's own experience, the next form of physical suffering is a refinement of "correction", the bearing-rein, favoured in the 19th century presumably (as the "Horses of San Marco" suggested) to make the new model of horse, the lower-necked thoroughbred, resemble its vanished predecessor, the romantically arched-necked, high-necked, warhorse. The Earl of W- is a good master, but weak with his wife; the coachman is also good but weak; we are sliding down the moral scale. The bearing-rein episode is the event that first "blemishes" Beauty, and ensures he is sold away from Ginger and quality homes. It is remarkable especially in that it is the Earl's marital inadequacy which precipitates disaster; as the coachman says,

> Confound these bearing-reins. . . . I thought we should have mischief soon—master will be sorely vexed; but there, if a woman's husband can't rule her, of course a servant can't; so I wash my hands of it, and if she can't get to the Duchess' garden party, I can't help it.

Behind the individuals, the Countess with her "silk rustling a little more than usual" and the cruel and thoughtless drivers Beauty meets in the livery stables, is the system, summed up by Sewell in the spectre of "fashion." It is "fashion" which dictates the bearing-rein; and for "fashion" men dock horses' tails:

> " . . . they came and cut off my long beautiful tail, through the flesh and through the bone, and took it away . . . a life-long wrong and a life-long loss. . . . 'For fashion', if you know what that means."

The horse (along with servants and wives) is the victim of male fashion in Sewell's indignation with such contemporary issues as card-parties, the Crimean war, the sale of drink, elections and hunting. Like *Fanny Hill, Black Beauty* universalises the moral experience of the individual. As Fanny waits and innocently falls at "the intelligence office" (the employment agency where the brothel-keepers go for new material), Black Beauty waits in the line at horse-fairs, wondering what new master will appear. Both Beauty and Fanny are impressed by the crowds and coaches and hurry of London; the city contains and thereby symbolises a more violent range of experience and "masters" than any other landscape.

SEWELL'S PHILOSOPHY centres on the character and expertise of the "master." Like Fanny, Beauty concludes that the man's physical and moral efficiency is necessary to a good relationship between master and brute. The ideal coachman is

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"John Manly." He can gentle any horse with "the Birtwick balls, sir!", maintaining that

> the Birtwick horse-balls cure almost any vicious horse . . . made up of patience and gentleness, firmness and petting, one pound of each to be mixed up with half a pint of common sense, and given to the horse every day.

The horse, however, must like a wife honour his side of the relationship. Beauty's "wise old mother, Duchess", delivers him a sermon at the start, whose assumptions linger today behind the philosophy of, say, *Cosmopolitan*:

> There are a great many kinds of men; there are good, thoughtful men like our master, that any horse may be proud to serve; but there are bad, cruel men . . . a great many foolish men, vain, ignorant and careless . . . a horse never knows who may buy him, or who may drive him; it is all a chance for us, but still I say, do your best wherever it is, and keep up your good name.

Beauty follows this advice throughout his fortunes, even at the livery stable or the carter's. But Ginger, Antigone of Birtwick Hall, is far angrier with the system. She blames "men" who have ruined her mouth, so she cannot "carry the mistress":

> She often used to envy me, and said it was all the fault of the breaking-in, and the gag bit in London, that her mouth was not so perfect as mine; and then old Sir Oliver would say, "There, there! don't vex yourself; you have the greatest honour; a mare that can carry a tall man of our master's weight, with all your spring and sprightly action, does not need to hold her head low because she does not carry the lady; we horses must take things as they come."

Ginger is the great indignant feminist:

> "Horse-flesh!" "Yes, that is all he thought about." And Ginger stamped her foot as if the very thought of him made her angry.

She is "much excited" at the docking story:

> Ginger flung up her head with flashing eyes and distended nostrils declaring that men were brutes and blockheads.

But, as rebel against the system, she falls lower than Beauty in the end; her embittered philosophy is fulfilled, her flashing spirit lost:

> "Men are stronger, and if they are cruel and have no feeling, there is nothing that we can do, but just bear it."

The moral precept endorsed by *Black Beauty* as by *Justine* is virtuous and tear-jerking passive endurance. De Sade in his dedicatory letter hopes Constance will weep at *Justine* and say

> Oh, how much these pictures of crime make me proud to love virtue! How sublime she is in her tears! How misfortunes ennoble her!

Equally, Clarissa, Maggie, Tess, Ruth, Lizzie Hexham are ennobled by suffering at "man's hands." Yet, in "her" passive and exploited relationship with men a woman gains a nobility she would not otherwise naturally possess; it is men's use of her that gives her "virtue." Even Anna Sewell does not believe the system can or should be changed. The underlying principle and implicit faith in man's power to confer nobility, even in his aggression towards female nature, is summed up in Wordsworth's response to his own sympathy for inanimate nature:

> *I grieve, when on the darker side*
> *Of this great change I look; and there behold*
> *Such outrage done to nature as compels*
> *The indignant power to justify herself:*
> *Yea to avenge her violated rights. . . .*
>
> *The Excursion* (1814)

For even he confesses, in the midst of indignant sympathy, that "nature" benefits spiritually from physical male aggression:

> *yet do I exult,*
> *Casting reserve away, exult to see*
> *An intellectual mastery exercised*
> *O'er the blind elements; a purpose given,*
> *A perseverance fed; almost a soul*
> *Imparted—to brute matter.*

IN PORNOGRAPHY, says Steven Marcus (*The Other Victorians*, 1966), landscape is the supine female form. Man enters and exploits it as organ or "engine", creator and destroyer. Nature's role in this world is "to confirm the existence of its creator", which is a feature in other poets' responses, besides Wordsworth, to the Industrial Revolution. In James Thompson (e.g. *Autumn*, 1726–30), Industry "rouses man" to get to work on Nature. Under man's touch, nature in diverse guises "rears its head", in language not unlike the more self-gratulatory descriptions of organs and engines in *Fanny Hill*. Tess's persecution by the male system is expressed allegorically in her sufferings on the threshing-machine, which the "engine-man" controls:

> He stood apathetic beside his portable repository of force, round whose hot blackness the morning air quivered. . . . His fire was waiting incandescent, his steam was at high pressure, in a few seconds he could make the long strap move at an invisible velocity. Behind its extent the environment might be corn, straw or chaos: it was all the same to him. If any of the autochthonous idlers asked him what he called himself, he replied shortly, "an engineer."

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Tess's suffering has as background the technical rape of that environment of which she is in colour and spirit so often a part. The "engine" exploits them both:

> The incessant quivering, in which every fibre of her frame participated, had thrown her into a stupefied reverie in which her arms worked on independently of her consciousness. She hardly knew where she was, and she did not hear Izzie Huett tell her from below that her hair was tumbling down. . . .
>
> Whenever Tess lifted her head she beheld always the great upgrown straw-stack, with the men in shirtsleeves upon it, against the gray north sky; in front of it the long red elevator . . . a perpetual stream of straw ascended, a yellow river running up-hill, and spouting out on top of the rick.

Scene and language reflect her unconscious passivity in the far more muted, desexualised tableau, her actual defloration.

MAN ENNOBLES nature, woman, animal, by imposing suffering on "her" and the male author naturally endorses the inevitability of such a pattern, since he is, ultimately, the creator and destroyer of the women whose virtue he celebrates: it is he who is really imposing the suffering. Kipling ennobles the polo pony who breaks his back to win his master's game (*The Maltese Cat*, 1898). Man on horse, man in the seat of empire, is man in command of his material, a shorthand symbol for the "master" of a fiction. The language of empire reflects the imagery of contemporary pornographic fantasy: as *Playboy*'s current imagery revolves round gear-levers and body work and engine capacity (horse-power), in the 18th and 19th centuries horse and riding imagery was endemic in the language of government ("reins of power"), explicit sexual encounters, as in Cleland, and, in polite society, the appraisal of fair women. Bob Stables, for instance (*Bleak House*, 1852) reiterates that Lady Deadlock is the "best-groomed woman in the whole stud" who "made the most of all her points", even when he exclaims he had "no idea she was a bolter." Man in sexual or physical relation to the outside world is an emblem of author in relation to his apparently externally derived material; and nothing can ever equal the conviction with which the Victorian novelists rode their theme.

Towards the end of the 19th century, however, came disenchantment with the clichés of the Industrial Revolution, indignation with land's rape and the corresponding sense that "her" identity was unmade rather than ennobled by man's use:

> *Hack and rack the growing green!*
> *Since country is so tender*
> *To touch, her being so slender*

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That, like this sleek and seeing ball
But a prick will make no eye at all.
Hopkins, *Binsey Poplars* (1879)

Increasingly, the wish to find "I" where man's hands (as it were) make "no I at all", found expression both in growing feminism and in the animal story.

The animal story, ushered in by *Black Beauty*, had its heyday between 1880 and 1940. Its theme is the animal imprisoned and escaped, like Bagheera (*The Jungle Book*, 1894–95) who carried under his chin the secret mark of the collar he'd worn, like Finn the Wolfhound (eponymous hero, A. J. Dawson, 1908), imprisoned in Australia and tortured by a "man with an iron bar" (sadism travels well; in *The Lustful Turk*, 1828, the English gentlewomen are sold at Levantine slave-fairs into the harem). Or animals hunted, as in the stories of the English-born American naturalist Ernest Thompson Seton (1860–1946); or Kipling again, in *The White Seal* who leads his less idealist colleagues in suffering to an island where fur-traders never come; or *Bambi* (1923), written under a pseudonym by the journalist Siegmund Salzmann (1869–1947); or finally the horridly explicit hunting-scenes in *Tarka the Otter* (1927).

The rise of the animal story coincided also with the rise of the naturalist or animal doctor as hero (lucrative motif now), who made his strongest impact on English fiction as Dr Dolittle. Hugh Lofting (1886–1947), the almost exact contemporary of Thompson Seton and Salzmann, wrote his first Dolittle book for his own children in the First War. The ruling relationship between man and animals here is affectionate comradeship; but the books have their share of fear. Sophy the Seal is imprisoned and must be freed; the Green Canary's variety of adventures and masters reflects, in miniature, the experience of Black Beauty, Moll or Fanny.

Later through the 20th century the image of the relationship between man and brute was changing. Enid Bagnold reflected the feminist movement, perhaps, by reversing the sexes in it. *National Velvet* (1935) celebrates the girl on top; its images are far closer to our own (the princess and the show-jumper), so also is the more off-beat beauty of the partners. The horse ("not quite clean gelded") has a jester's colouring; the girl, whose sisters are "golden greyhounds", has a flat chest and wears a plate. Nevertheless, she is "a fairy child" and he is "a stocky prince"! Their beauty is at an angle to any glamorous stereotype:

> What was so piquant in the papers was that in a row of beauties "It was the plain one that did it."

In their relationship he provides the power and she directs it:

> She urged him no more, there was no need, but sat him still. He was a natural jumper. She did not attempt to dictate to him. They cleared the wall together, wildly, ludicrously-high, with savage effort and glory, and twice the power and force that was needed. Velvet felt his hind-quarters drop when they should have hitched.

Unfortunately, however, the girl on top has not proved so vital as an image in the inspiring and shaping of texts. The animal story's debased descendant is the pony-story, whose main features are the girl's acquisition of, troubles with, and eventual triumph on, with, and/or over, the horse. It still keeps, however, common features with contemporary pornography. It has a predominantly single-sex, and apparently insatiable market, even when badly and repetitiously written. The "pony-story" doesn't satisfy as book, but as an image of the activity it describes; the rules of its making are not the moral rules that shape real fiction but the rules of "equestrian" interest. As Steven Marcus says, whenever

> there is a choice to be made, the pornographic convention triumphs over the literary.

AS THE PONY-STORY is a less vivid or satisfactory form of the genre opened up by *Black Beauty*, so the voice of a real woman saying "I" seems somehow less coherent and compelling as literary form than the male fantasies which preceded it: Erica Jong is not as vivid as Moll, nor Emmanuelle as Fanny. Possibly the ruling image of the relation between man and "brute matter" to which he gave "almost a soul" (which pornography reiterated and whose rebuttal helped shape the Victorian novel) was particularly satisfying for the male author (or woman modelling her voice on his), in that it functioned as an optimistic image for his relationship with his material. Nineteenth-century narrative confidence was interdependent with contemporary confidence in the *status quo*, the relation between man and woman, man and nature. But *post equitem sedet atra cura*: the author as master, horseman, creator, destroyer, is not so convincing an image to write by now, for man or woman. The inner female world, the novel's first and possibly natural landscape, has long been turned over to the National Trust.

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Carnival Customs

On Brotherhood & Enmity—By JOHN BOSSY

BEFORE HE became famous as "the author of *Montaillou*", Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie was known, among other things, for a book on *The Peasants of Languedoc* which, heavily statistical in the main, included a comparatively brief but exciting section on social and religious conflicts. There were many memorable things in it, but the *beau morceau* was an account of events occurring in the town of Romans, actually just outside the province, on the other side of the Rhône in Dauphiné. There, at Carnival-time (that is, from Candlemas, February 2nd, to Shrove Tuesday) in 1580, in the middle of the wars of religion and of a tax-rebellion by the surrounding peasantry, a variety of highly-coloured folkloric events had happened during which the upper and lower classes of the town had demonstrated rabid hostility to one another, and the festal season had ended with a sort of ritual massacre of the plebs by the patricians.

The general conclusion which the reader might draw was that here, in a slightly eccentric guise, was a classic example of class conflict, motivated by demographic and economic changes which could be demonstrated quantitatively with scientific precision. Since much of the book dealt with the 16th century, which included the Reformation and a great deal of religious conflict in the area, Christianity required to be dealt with somehow, but by treating it in terms of quantifiable matters like tithes and literacy, Le Roy Ladurie gave the impression, common enough in writings of the *Annales* school at the time, that feelings about Christianity were epiphenomena of something more interesting, which could be expounded in graphs.

The Peasants of Languedoc came out in 1966. After thirteen years, which along with other successes had seen its author elevated to the *Collège de France*, the *beau morceau* emerged as a whole book, now translated into (American) English as *Carnival*.[1] To the natural question: "If I have read *The Peasants of Languedoc*, do I need to read *Carnival*?", the answer might depend a bit on who you were. If you were a member of the general public, it might appear to be "No," except that if you *are* a member of the general public you almost certainly have not read *The Peasants of Languedoc*.

The account of the carnival itself depends on the same two narratives which were used in the earlier version, those of the judge Antoine Guérin and of the notary Eustache Piémond: the new information in the book is mostly not about the carnival itself but about the social and economic structure of the town and its countryside, or else about the political and financial problems of the province of Dauphiné in general. It is not, I feel, particularly interesting in itself; it frequently interrupts the narrative, in a tiresome way, when the dagger is poised to strike; and it only occasionally sheds light on the events of the carnival. The book does, intermittently, give the same sort of pleasure as *Montaillou*; but it is really cast in the earlier and sterner mould of *The Peasants of Languedoc*, given a face-lift for the occasion. However the face-lift has been an extensive and interesting operation: *Carnival* may possibly not tell you much more than you knew already about what happended in Romans in February 1580, though it will certainly tell you something; but it will tell you quite a lot about what has been happening to French historians during the 1970s.

FOR A START, something has happened to the class struggle. One of the amazing things about *Montaillou*, in the context of French history-writing, was Le Roy Ladurie's conclusion that in this 14th-century village they had never heard of class conflict. In *Carnival*, second version, it is still very much in evidence, and well supported by the facts as he presents them, but one or two things have changed since 1966. One detail: in 1966 he wrote of a "massacre" by the upper of the lower classes, of the people being "slaughtered like pigs"; now he explains that the total number of deaths was probably between 20 and 30, of whom 11 were judicial executions after the event and the rest killed in the rioting. We are not then dealing with a sort of social St Bartholomew's Day, as might have been supposed, though the event is nasty enough in itself.

In a more general way, he has come across, apparently in the works of the medieval Muslim cosmographer Ibn Khaldun (though he might have found it nearer home in those of Sir Lewis Namier), the theory that social conflicts occur not between classes but as a result of family feuds in the upper class, which for one reason or another arouse popular support, like football matches. Even on second

[1] *Carnival: A People's Uprising at Romans, 1579-1580*. By EMMANUEL LE ROY LADURIE. Translated by MARY FEENEY. Scolar Press, £12.50.

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thoughts he does not find that that is the case here: it remains, he says, a pure class struggle, but there are qualifications. What was a two-sided conflict in 1966 has become a three-sided one in 1980; family conflicts and other personal feuds are given a bit more scope; and an important new element in the social constitution of Romans has appeared. This is the fraternity, which is after all an artificial family.

For all I can see, Le Roy Ladurie is justified in holding that these complications in the social structure presented—or rather, these concessions to what is in effect a different conception of the social structure—do not fundamentally affect the correctness of his original analysis. But there are times when I feel he is protesting a bit too much. This is particularly so in his treatment of the judge Antoine Guérin, pillar of law, order, and *bien-pensanterie* in Romans, leader of the repression, and author of one of the principal accounts of the disturbances. Clearly, Le Roy Ladurie cannot stand him, and there is no reason why he should, but the tone of his comments is frankly melodramatic and seems to me vulnerable to Herbert Butterfield's remarks about moral indignation in historians being a use of power as illegitimate as Guérin's own may well have been. I also wonder whether, at one important point, it has not interfered with Le Roy Ladurie's treatment of the facts.

THE ISSUE IS THIS. On the night of Shrove Monday, after a fortnight of general bumptiousness indulged in by the three carnival *reynages* or festal communities, named after the Capon, the Partridge, and the Eagle or Cock, the smartest of these, that of the Partridge, had been having a post-dinner dance in the town hall. Those of the Capon, which had attracted the bolshier elements in the town and had for its king a popular hero called Paumier, dressed up as a bear (he had even attended meetings of the town council in this get-up), were standing outside in the square watching the show. At some point a number of armed youths from the Partridge party tumbled out of the town hall and there was a street fight, during which Paumier was shot dead. This led to a *mêlée* in which the Partridges killed a number of the Capons and took control of the town by force.

It is impossible to tell exactly what happened in the square. It was in darkness, lit only by the torches the children of the town were running around with, as was customary; they apparently continued to do this oblivious of commotion and bloodshed. But the likelihood is that a number of young Partridge ladies, making their way to the dance, had been the object of obscene remarks and possibly worse on the part of the Capons, and the Partridge youths had rushed out to defend their honour. Anyway, Le Roy Ladurie takes this to be the *Schwerpunkt* of a premeditated scheme on the part of Judge Guérin, whose own account claims that the affray was accidental, to smash once and for all a seditious movement among the craftsmen and local peasants, associated with the Capon *reynage* and led by Paumier.

As evidence for this he cites a letter written to King Henri III by the lieutenant-governor of Dauphiné, Maugiron, a few days before. As the letter is cited from the *Bulletin de la société statistique de l'Isère* for 1890, and not quoted in full, the average reader must depend on what Le Roy Ladurie tells him to know what is in it. As quoted, it says that Maugiron, worried by the state of effervescence in and around Romans, had sent his brother to investigate, and managed to persuade members of the upper classes and some good Catholics to keep an eye on and oppose a popular agitation which he regarded, wrongly, as inspired by Protestant rebels in the adjacent alpine valleys. Le Roy Ladurie takes this to mean that Maugiron had concocted a scheme with Guérin, with whom he was certainly in touch, whereby (1) a dispute in the Capon party arising out of a row or feud between Paumier and his second-in-command Laroche would be utilised to set up a rival *reynage*, that of the Eagle, led by Laroche and on the side of law and order; and (2) the Partridge party would be used to conceal a body of storm-troopers from the local gilded youth, ready to massacre the Capons when Guérin gave the signal.

This seems a pretty hazardous conjecture. Certainly, on their first public appearance the Partridges turned out of a mock-Mass with real and not mock weapons in their hands, but in the circumstances this might seem mere prudence, and "Who knows if Maugiron himself did not surreptitiously contribute in order to bring arms into Romans for his friends and Guérin's?" is a feeble gambit. It does not warrant the confident statement, based on the letter cited, that the final "massacre" "had all been arranged secretly several days earlier." Is it really likely that the king's representative in the province, even with the advice of a local notable, would think of maintaining law and order through the organisation of carnival companies? After the Partridges had got control of the town, Guérin wrote to Maugiron: if the two of them had organised the thing in the first place, you might expect a paean of triumph. In fact all he did was ask for reinforcements. Even the disgraceful fact that Guérin, when later ennobled, celebrated this victory by putting on his arms an uprooted apple-tree *(pommier/Paumier arraché)*, which is one of the strongest points against him, does not really justify the treatment he gets. If you are going to revive narrative history, there are pedantic disciplines to be accepted.

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ANOTHER THING which has happened since 1966 is to do with Christianity. I do not think it is entirely Anglophone prejudice to believe that the France of the wars of religion has never looked quite the same since Natalie Davis's famous essay on "The Rites of Violence", which succeeded in getting across the notion that, if you took the trouble to find out what 16th-century Frenchmen and women meant by Christianity, you would discover that Christianity, and not for example inflation, was what the wars of religion were actually about.

Although her arguments do not apply directly to the carnival of Romans, something of their spirit has entered the present version of the story which was not present in the original one. There is a new sense of the importance of the fraternity and its rituals of togetherness as religious institutions central to the social arrangements of traditional Europe. There is a new awareness, drawn I imagine from Julio Caro Baroja's book on the subject, that Carnival—which means the End of Meat, or of the Flesh—is a Christian festival, one of a pair of ritual opposites of which the other half is Lent and designed to get the sins of aversion and concupiscence into the open in order that they can be properly compensated for by penance.

I am not sure how far it is possible to conflate this theory of Carnival, as Le Roy Ladurie does, with more exotic ones to the effect that it is a heathen survival; and he seems to me to have missed a point in favour of a Christian interpretation of his own carnival by not twigging that when the people of Romans, as represented by Capons in a state of intense irritation about peculation among public officials, went about the streets demanding restitution, they were actually referring to the regulatory procedures of the sacrament of penance, or confession, for an offence assimilated to usury.

As he points out elsewhere, and this is where his case differs from those discussed by Natalie Davis, the carnival of Romans was a conflict between Catholics, at a season, precisely, when conflict between Catholics was legitimate. Normally it would be confined within symbolic forms and marginal violences; this time it turned into the real thing. I think myself that he might have allowed more strongly for the inherent likelihood that, given the nature of the festival, something of this kind may have happened, and not been quite so keen to diagnose conspiracy. For no one has demonstrated more clearly than he has done in this book how the social constitution of a traditional Catholicism is a segmental, competitive, divided structure, prolific in leagues, communities and brotherhoods, to say nothing of religious orders, which nurture enmity as they nurture solidarity; whose oneness is a precarious Babel, continually collapsing, continually to be recommenced.

Graham Greene

WAYS OF ESCAPE

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That is why I would take a less dim view than Le Roy Ladurie does of the earnest suggestion made by Maugiron to the Estates of Dauphiné, meeting at Grenoble, that they should end their acrimonious deliberations with a general embrace all round: the holy kiss, the *pax* of the Mass and the marriage rite. He did not think this would be an "ultimate solution" to class or other conflicts rending the people of Dauphiné: there was no ultimate solution except in the next world. What he did think was that, if the people claimed to be Christians, they must on some particular occasions ritually present themselves as one before the Lord, just as on others—a Carnival, a meeting of Estates—they would ritually present themselves according to their native separations. The normal occasions for this would be Easter or Corpus Christi, the *Fête-Dieu*, and while it is not likely that there was much oneness going on in Romans at Easter or the *Fête-Dieu* of 1580, it is a bit lop-sided to leave them out altogether. Le Roy Ladurie might like to have a go at that subject next time. On second thoughts, even if you have read *The Peasants of Languedoc*, you will learn quite a lot that is new from *Carnival*, though you will probably need to skip the statistical parts in order to find out what it is.

Lifescapes

New Novels—By PENELOPE LIVELY

BEHIND THE TEXT of Kingsley Amis's *Russian Hide and Seek*,[1] suggested but never stated, there lurks a presence: the vanished landscape. There are only young trees (eucalyptus, poplar, Douglas fir) in this England of Russian occupation where transport is mainly horse-drawn; the old ones have long since gone up in smoke. The stately home occupied by Petrovsky (Controller for the Northampton area) is furnished with Russian imports (a caged siskin, a stuffed brown bear) and the memory of its yew hedges, statues, trees is preserved only in a photograph. Camomile and pimpernel flourish in the Doric temple ("Some kind of summer-house, I imagine") but since Alexander Petrovsky, the bored amoral young Russian ensign who for lack of a better word one has to call the book's hero, doesn't know the name of anything, or care, that is neither here nor there. He cannot particularise; he gazes rather than looks; he observes a row of modern (in our sense) houses with respect and awe because they date from the legendary Pacification; "There was no one to offer him the opinion that they were offensive to the eye and the mind." Oak and ash and elm have never been mentioned, nor has a great deal else but one of the skills of this closely written novel is to present passion without hammering the reader on the head. "And that will be England gone, The shadows, the meadows, the lanes, The guildhalls, the carved choirs"; Philip Larkin's apprehensions in a different vein keep coming to mind as one reads the book.

Because of course the landscape is the least of it. There is nothing else left either; 31% literacy, no history, no culture. The English lurk on the fringes of the novel, speaking only occasionally through the amiable mindless girl who (among others) services Alexander sexually, and the ageing clergyman who is coerced into putting on a church service to suit the purposes of the Cultural Commission who are restoring to the English various things they neither remember nor recognise such as religion and Shakespeare. "You poor ignorant illiterate incurious nitwit", says Glover, the clergyman (in English, which the occupying forces barely understand, except for catchphrases—piss off, old customer, well I'm buggered, have a good day). It is the Russians who are the matter of the novel: their ignorance and incuriosity, their boredom, their apathy, their amorality. They have no creed; Marxism is dead. The young liberal revolutionaries who plan a preposterously ramshackle coup to restore England to the English under cover of the Cultural Commission, and are chillingly trapped by the security forces, don't really know why they're doing it. For something to do, as much as anything. Vanag, the security chief who has rounded them up, gleefully explains to them their own inadequacies:

> "I realise I'm very lucky, in that I know what to do. I have something to live by—the values and rules of the institution I'm part of and have been part of for many years. Traditions, if you like. Now some of you may argue that those rules and traditions leave a certain amount to be desired, and there may well be something in that. But for me, for us, for these guards, they're better than nothing. Which is what you've got."

Most Russians don't even know about the Pacifica-

[1] *Russian Hide and Seek*. By KINGSLEY AMIS. Hutchinson, £5.95.

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tion, or care. Vanag leaves us in little doubt what happened (resistance—"It had been said earlier that they had gone soft. If they had, I'd be interested to know what they were like before") and why ("There had been disorders here, runaway inflation, mass unemployment, strikes, strike-breaking, rioting, then much fiercer rioting when a leftist faction seized power"), and jeers at his prisoners for their ignorance: "Because you don't know how to live in the present you haven't the slightest interest in the past." There is a curious resemblance between Vanag and Glover.

There is also a tempting parallel to be made with the Roman occupation: the bored, stranded occupiers importing their comforts (vodka, dill-flavoured Ochotnitscha), playing military games, fucking the local girls. But it stops there; these invaders are disorganised uncultured shamblers compared with the Romans. One of them tries to define it—"The essence of the Russian character, in fact as well as in fiction, has always been theatricality." The game played by the young officers is to go out into the darkness and blast off at each other with pistols: to devastating effect. You think of the scene in *War and Peace* in which Pierre and André climb out on to the parapet and get drunk: suicidal and meaningless bravado. The Russian characters get pretty short shrift, from the egotistical Alexander to the appalling Mrs Korotchenko whose sexual boorishness is too much even for him. Bleak lives in a landscape scoured of memory, in which nobody cares about anything because nobody knows about anything. And if occasionally one is left in some doubt as to whether Kingsley Amis intended an apocalyptic warning or the fast-moving thriller which the book becomes in the final third, there is no resisting the accuracy of the world he creates. I, for one, shall feel a certain queasiness next time I pass by Kettering or Northampton. Moreover, I suspect the obvious reading of the novel won't do. The death of language, of enquiry, of conviction; the triumph of self-interest and compliance. I don't think Kingsley Amis is just writing about what will happen if the Russians come; *Russian Hide and Seek* can also be taken as a fable of what might even if they don't.

SETTING THE WORLD ON FIRE is Angus Wilson's richest, most complex novel,[2] if, in the last resort, one of the least satisfying. Yet, that being said, the dissatisfaction seems unjustified; all the Wilson skills are displayed, all that imaginative power and reflective insight that makes him, for me,

[2] *Setting The World On Fire.* By ANGUS WILSON. Secker & Warburg, £6.50.

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RUSSIA AND WORLD ORDER

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To those who are already familiar with George Liska's works, *Russia and World Order* will be of special interest. It should also appeal to those concerned about the moral dilemma facing the West today. 208pp, £8.75.

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possibly the greatest English novelist of the post-war years. So what has gone wrong? It is a deeply symbolic novel, operatic in its symbolism and deliberately so, and perhaps it is just this that is unsettling even for the most devoted Wilson reader; you think regretfully of the calmer texture of *Late Call* and *The Middle Age of Mrs Eliot*. The opulence of the conception seems to blur the more unobtrusive but crucial novelistic crafts for which Angus Wilson is distinguished.

The central symbolism is architectural. Tothill House, the mansion owned by the Mosson family which occupies a vast tract of central London stretching from Westminster Abbey to St John's, Smith Square, was built by Sir Roger Pratt, a marvel of classical regularity; within the very centre of the house was inserted, in violent contrast, Vanbrugh's Great Hall, a triumph of baroque flamboyance which carries upon its walls and ceiling Verrio's painting of the Phaethon legend. The Hall, the painting, and Lully's opera *Phaethon* (originally written for production in the Hall itself but never performed) are the essential matter of the novel: the story that is told is the story of Piers Mosson's ambition—eventually and tragically realised—to stage the production at last.

The secondary symbolism lies in the dispositions of the two heroes—the Mosson brothers, Piers and Tom. They are small boys when we first meet them in 1948 in a powerful and enormously clever scene which at once introduces us to the house and the family and states the novel's theme and direction. Tom, aged six, is weeping with fear in the Great Hall, oppressed by its size and implications; Piers, slightly older, is exhilarated and intoxicated, embarked on his obsession with the place and its subject. Sir Hubert Mosson, the present heir to Tothill, consoles his nephew in the level-headed language with which he has already explained and diminished the myth:

> "But we don't have to worry, the world isn't all Phaethons or Vanbrughs. The men that keep it safe and in order are the Pratts, the men who know how to keep themselves in hand, the blokes who do things well and regularly. If it wasn't for them, the ice *would* break, the flames *would* fly up into the sky."

Ice and fire, order and irregularity; Pratt and Vanbrugh; Phaethon ("tragic, wayward, ambitious living humanity") and Jove ("noble, ordered, smug, dead statuary"). The statements of contrast are threaded through the book, a rich, intricate and heady pattern. The brothers are set in apposition; the worthy, unimaginative Mossons, Hubert and Jackie, his American heiress mother, are complemented by their fiery, dashing Tothill ancestors and by the wealthy Italian, Marina Luzzi, whom Hubert intends to marry, carrying on the family tradition of injections of external wealth when it seems expedient. Marina Luzzi is a central figure, as crucial in her way as the Mossons themselves. The trouble is that she remains flat upon the page when so much else—the house, the Great Hall, most of the large cast of characters—shapes so satisfyingly to the mind's eye: the garden, the rooms, the paintings are seen, the vapid chatter of the boys' poor silly widowed mother Rosemary is heard. But Marina is given a grating idiom that does more to inter her than bring her to life, try as you may you cannot hear it: "Oh! that boaring Lesbian. . . I don't 'ave deals with freaks, I told 'er. It was vulgar, but you 'ave to be. These bourgeois Lesbians are like coarse-skinned—'Ow do you say?—navvies."

"Chaos is the only exciting thing left", Marina says, "I adore chaos. Throwing all the rules out of the window at the old bores. That's what art is about. Exciting art. . . ." But she is trounced and driven out, in one of the novel's several fine dramatic scenes, by Jackie ("Regularity and elegance. They are the important things. Especially when chaos is trying to take over. Keeping beautiful things going. . ."). And so is Rosemary, offending against the family's dignity and sensibilities by her intention to live with her lover. The boys, in the sixth form at Westminster by then, loyally propose to follow her, sacrificing the inheritance that will come to Piers eventually, but the Mosson sense of continuity, stated by dying 90-year-old Grandfather, cannot have that. There is reconciliation, of a kind, and in the last act (theatrically and rightly the novel divides thus) we find Piers, ten years on and by now the internationally famous producer that we have always known he will become, master of Tothill and at last about to stage the production of *Phaethon* that was first proposed when he was a schoolboy.

THE END IS UNEXPECTED, shocking and entirely successful. It is not there that the uneasiness lies. Rather, I think, it is with an internal discord between the grandeur of the imagery and the presentation of some of the characters—notably Marina Luzzi but to some extent also the even more vital figures of Tom and Piers, Pratt and Van as they call each other in recognition of their oppositeness. In the long central act of the novel their conversation seldom sounds like that of 17- and 18-year-olds—too measured, too considered surely even for clever public schoolboys with Oxford scholarships. It is as though the all-pervading symbolism has at this point been allowed to obscure the characters through whom it must be presented. They have drowned in it.

And yet, saying this, and it has to be said, one feels a carping wretch. Because there is so much to praise: the accuracy and economy with which we are taken from 1948 to 1956–7 to 1969; the wit;

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the dramatic force; the neat Wilsonian touches like Rosemary's cultivation of species roses in the late 1950s (Sir Angus has always been a dab hand at the sociology of gardening). The novel gives pleasure—and excitement—on almost every page. Read it and see for yourself. My reservation is simply that the mixture is too rich, the fumes obscure the taste. Maybe such a criticism is in harmony with the language of the novel: structure against flamboyance, coherence against abandon.

MODERN NOVELISTS are often accused—with some justice—of not presenting the world of work. This charge certainly can't be levelled against Margaret Drabble. Kate, heroine of *The Middle Ground*,[3] is a professional women's lib journalist (we are never told what paper she works for, except that it is about to go on prolonged strike) and her daily grind is charted as meticulously as her emotional life. We know what she writes about, how she finds her material, what she thinks about it all. And equally her friend Evelyn, with whose husband Kate has had a lengthy affair; the author evokes all too tellingly the social worker's trek from Day Care Centre (swarming polyglot children, Playdo, Wendy House, runny noses, inadequate mums) to valiant stoical old woman to the brawling household in which she is almost blinded by a demented Rastafarian and ends up in hospital.

Violence haunts the book and erupts, thus, from time to time. Hugo, Kate's long-time platonic friend, has lost an arm as war correspondent. Kate's state of mind is savaged by the abortion of a spina bifida baby, a late baby, an unintended baby, Ted's child. But the most apparent violence is the lurking threat of London in the 1970s: the footsteps behind you in the Tube, the crop-headed young tricked out in leather and safety-pins, the brawls, the gangs, the thefts. And the landscape of last week, last year (for the book is filled with a sense of the passage of time, of inexorable change) is described with almost documentary accuracy:

> Pock-marked sooty bricks, mica-chipped cement, corrugated iron hoardings plastered with posters . . . subterranean pipes lagged in strange khaki grease-covered rags. Soft bulging plastic surfaces stood side by side with rigid ribbed grey dustbins.

This is a detailed precise landscape, firmly tethered to time and place by description, by dialogue, by reference. It is the world of the Equal Opportunities Commission and the DHSS and COHSE and NUPE; what a godsend Margaret Drabble is going to be to social historians of the 21st century.

Kate is forty and at the mid-life crisis. Tough,

[3] *The Middle Ground*. By MARGARET DRABBLE. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £5.95.

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independent, muddled, opinionated; the trouble is that you want to dislike Kate and can't, which is a tribute to her creator's skill. She is a nice woman, is Kate, and if her voyage of self-analysis is sometimes maddening it is never tedious and always thought-provoking. She is a child of the times, and her crisis is to do with her own realisation of this: "... as everyone else got more interested in Women, she became less and less so.... She was sick of opinions, slogans, ideologies, factions, causes.... She had brought up three children on views." And yes, at one point someone even suggests that she should go off and do a degree in sociology. Mercifully, she has the good sense not to. Because good sense she does have, as well as niceness, and it is this that will pull her out of the mire in the end and enables the novel to end on a note of optimism, of the triumph of persons over circumstances.

Circumstances are the crux of the book, and what people make or fail to make of them. The narrative proceeds—with a curious pleated effect, as each retrospective filling-out of a character colours and changes what we already know—by a process of recollection. The past is everywhere: Kate's childhood in a dismal London suburb, Evelyn's middle-class background ("reared on notions of thrift, prudence, propriety"), Hugo's irritated reflections that "everything one does is weighed down with history ... modern life is in some mysterious way too fragmented to be comprehensible ... modern consciousness is so burdened with its own past that it has worked itself into a state of paralysis", Ted's ponderings on the infidelity of memory, the quality it possesses of enlarging and even faking happiness. Ted is a microbiologist (we learn how he spends his time, too). His affair with Kate peters out, leaving unharmed Kate's solider relationship with Evelyn; friendships, in this confused and confusing landscape of the '70s, often do last better than love. Family bonds, too: Kate's marriage to Stuart has long since foundered, but she loves and is loved by her children. She is worried by "the newly forged code of feminist guilt"; amid all this uncertainty about how a woman should be, how she should respond, whether she needs a man or doesn't, what remains is the timeless and unperplexing comfort of friends and children.

I must admit that I'm not absolutely clear what the author herself feels about Kate. A disadvantage of this documentary, chronicling approach to fiction is that there is a certain distancing effect as well; we watch Kate unfurl as a character, admire the accuracy of it all, but remain uninvolved. And the uninvolvement has something to do with an authorial ambivalence: as though commitment to a character, be it positive or negative, has been sacrificed in favour of commitment to an historical landscape. But the landscape itself is painstakingly created and Kate herself, emotional, impulsive, entirely credible, remains in the mind long after the book is finished.

JULIA FERNDALE is 47, widow of an army officer, living with her mother in comfort, though not affluence, in the Gloucestershire village of Stone St Martin. Doris Smith is a little younger, the alcoholic mother of illegitimate Joy, working in an Oxford Street shoe-shop and inhabiting a fly-blown flat in the more disagreeable part of Fulham. The second half of *Other People's Worlds*[4] is concerned with the relationship between this incongruous pair of women: the significance of the title becomes apparent, and the chapter headings—Julia's, Doris's, Doris in Julia's, Julia in Francis's.

One of William Trevor's strengths has always been the portrayal of the banality of evil. Nowhere has he done it better than in this novel; from the first vaguely disconcerting moment at the end of the first chapter when we realise that Julia's fiancé Francis Tyte is not all that he appears to be the horror mounts, almost casually, moving from one small revelation to another. Francis is a fine creation, a bit-part actor (distinguished chiefly as the pipe-smoking hero of a TV tobacco advertisement. a nice touch which perfectly establishes him for the reader) whose entire life is founded on fictional structures which crumble beneath him as he moves from one victim to another. Charming, plausible, he seeks out and fastens himself to people, extracts what he needs, and moves on leaving behind him the wreckage of those who shudder at the sound of his name. Julia, abandoned on her honeymoon after the smiling, almost reasonable revelation that he is in fact already married and actually only wanted her jewels, is the latest in this tragic procession. It is a measure of Francis's particular evil that the jewels are not especially valuable. Francis is mad, of course, but with a madness so ordinary, so undetectable that only occasionally, it is hinted, has he been rumbled. " 'You're a nutter, Francis', a girl he'd thought to be sympathetic had pronounced ... 'You're sick the way you cry, old boy', a man once said in Dieppe."

Francis has a bit-part in a television dramatisation of the life of Constance Kent, the 16-year-old murderess. He becomes obsessed with the murder; so, at a second remove, does the pathetic Doris, mother of his bastard daughter, who has adored him for 13 years and is driven literally distracted by her suspicions of his infidelity with the actress playing the part of Constance Kent. One of the elegancies of the novel is the compelling accuracy with which William Trevor gives us the assorted

[4] *Other People's Worlds*. By WILLIAM TREVOR. The Bodley Head, £5.95.

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worlds through which his characters move—somnolent village, seedy London—while at the same time ensuring that every page is shot through with the sense of menace that has been there since Francis sits on the bed in the spare room in Julia's house, removing "the traces of make-up which he always inconspicuously wore." We know that violence is going to be committed: but by who, and against whom? Meanwhile, the narrative takes us from one self-contained world to another, from the Gloucestershire hairdressing salon to the Pizzaland at which Doris and Joy have their occasional treat to the drill-hall in which the television rehearsals take place—" 'Without being crass', the director began, with smiles and stabbing gestures, 'we're into a conflict situation where Constance is concerned. . . . Without being simplistic . . . there's a stench of lechery beneath the scent of lovely English roses.' "

Francis, Julia and Doris are, in equal measure, the leading figures. If there is any structural uncertainty it is perhaps in the disappearance of Francis only half-way through the book—except that this in itself is in context: it is, after all, the effect of Francis that is the matter of the plot, the havoc that can be caused by mindless amorality. We are left then with Julia and Doris, with Doris's crazed alcoholic wanderings and Julia's reluctant, agonised and moral involvement. For Julia is a good woman, the antithesis to everything that Francis is; good, vulnerable, and in the last resort helpless against the anarchy of evil. This seems to be the bleak suggestion: that the rationality and purpose of those directed by such qualities as compassion and fairness and consideration are no match for the maverick perversity of the wicked. And if at the end there is a hint that Julia's conscience and charity may salvage something from the mess, it is an uncertain hint, to be taken or left as you think fit.

ALICE THOMAS ELLIS's second novel, *The Birds of the Air*,[5] is brief and very good indeed. She is one of those admirable economical writers who can reduce characterisation to a line, a phrase, an action, and use the same words to tell a story, point a moral and set a scene. Nothing wasted; every word essential. Mrs Marsh, widowed, has visitors for Christmas: her daughter Mary, who has recently lost her child, and her other daughter Barbara, who has just discovered the infidelity of her academic husband Sebastian (a memorable creation of a man locked within impermeable egotism). Barbara's children, Kate and Sam

[5] *The Birds of the Air*. By ALICE THOMAS ELLIS. Duckworth, £6.95.

Women in rural development: The People's Republic of China
by Elisabeth E. Croll. 2nd impression, 1980
Accounting the main changes affecting rural women that have been introduced in China, this book describes the entry of women into social production, the division of labour between the sexes that has been generated and the constraints influencing full participation of women in non-domestic production.
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(another splendid character—an adolescent whose alienation from the adult world is so total and logical as to compel awed respect), complete the resident group. The arrival of Christmas Day guests helps to bring about the disintegration of the surface calm and attention to seasonal requirements that Mrs Marsh has been so determinedly fostering. The wit is deadly; the accuracy is unswerving. People's behaviour at parties is nailed, and the way the Queen talks, and the alarm engendered by those who grieve. Because—oddly, for a book that makes you laugh so often—grief is what *The Birds of the Air* is about: the bleak plateau inhabited by the bereft. Mary, sitting at the window while events swirl around her, waits, quite simply, either for the resurrection of the dead that mourners have to believe in, or for her own death. Her detachment is as total as that of the selfish Sebastian or Sam with his albatross burden of adolescence, and a great deal more bitter.

Going Concerns

New & Collected Poetry—By ALAN BROWNJOHN

THE CUSTOM of publishing collected editions of poets' works in their lifetimes—to be distinguished from "complete" editions after their deaths—is a more recent phenomenon than most people suppose. One would guess that it stems largely from the habit of letting individual volumes go out of print: most poets with half-a-dozen books behind them, and with an increasing rather than a declining reputation, find that most of their work becomes unobtainable, since their fairly short print runs will have been exhausted within a couple of years of publication.

The "collected works" are therefore a useful way of restoring the poetry to the readers, as well as gathering up all the elusive, uncollected poems to which they would like to give permanence—and offering a larger volume on which critics and readers might like to pronounce a considered judgment. But the earlier a collected edition is assembled, the more the poet and his publishers seem to be asking for an *interim* judgment: the implication may be that there is more, perhaps much more, to come, even if the Collected is a rigorous and much-meditated offering of the work by which the poet wishes to stand or fall. In short, it's a greater risk, since that judgment *might* be unfavourable: so the poet has to balance the advantage of being once more obtainable against the danger of his life's work up to that point not finding absolute approval.

To minimise that danger, he needs to be sure that he has established not only his credentials with the reading public but also his personal trademarks, his warts and obsessions, with both readers and critics: collected editions can't be honourable but faceless, or they secure no more than one or two statutory notices and a one-way ticket to remainder counters—the bigger they come, the harder they fall. The most hopeful recipe for a worthwhile Collected includes ingredients like: a gradually increasing recognition and affection among poetry-readers, a number of well-known and well-loved poems tucked away in out-of-print volumes, an unmistakable style, a gift for keeping in the public eye with new work and public appearances, and an air of being very much a going concern. If the poet has all or most of these, he can publish his Collected (even with the mild apprehensions Vernon Scannell [1] expresses in his introductory note) and await the interim judgments without too much foreboding. He might even hope, as Robert Garioch[2] could not be blamed for hoping, that years of acclaim in his own country (Scotland in his case) might at last be balanced out by a little appreciation in England for a body of work that has been among the most varied and technically accomplished, the most witty, delicate and moving in our time, and from which English readers have been too well protected by a fence as thick as the Lallans glossary in the enterprising Carcanet edition.

BOTH VERNON SCANNELL AND GAVIN EWART [3] are heirs to that gentler sort of English modernism which paid its respects to Eliot (though not to Pound, or any insistently American or European modernism), took root in the early Auden and most of MacNeice, and branched out in individual ways in the work of poets like Roy Fuller and the late A. S. J. Tessimond. It is a poetry which embraces the immediate, wears and describes the scars of

[1] *New and Collected Poems, 1950–1980.* By VERNON SCANNELL. Robson Books, £3.95.
[2] *Collected Poems.* By ROBERT GARIOCH. Carcanet New Press, £3.95.
[3] *The Collected Ewart, 1933–1980.* By GAVIN EWART. Hutchinson, £10.00.

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ordinary living, is plain (including plain frightened and plain indignant) about life and death and moral problems, rarely intricate, rarely delicate, always absorbing in its firm yet friendly insistence that the here-and-now of modern urban existence is what almost all of us have to fit into for most of the time. In *A Mortal Pitch* (1957), Scannell was writing:

Sometimes I believe
Our lives are ungrammatical. I guess that some of you
Have misplaced the direct object: the longer I live
The less certain I feel of anything I do.
But now I begin
To digress. Write down these simple sentences:—
I am sentenced: I love: I murder: I sin.

Most of his poetry is about "simple sentences" of this kind, about the blunt and ordinary alarms of mortality ("In the thrilled blood, first inkling of the feud, / Still unresolved, between desire and fear"). He is some six years younger than Gavin Ewart, whose *Collected Ewart* begins with satires written at the age of seventeen in 1933, but like Ewart he produced little or nothing during service in the Second World War; recollections of the war, the sense of the precariousness of present security, and the indelible knowledge of violent impulse in himself and others surface continually in the later writing. Scannell considers formal discipline to be an important and necessary accompaniment, and the later Ewart finds it an essential challenge: in this emphasis they both appear to look back to a *pre*-modernist stage, and yet a well-crafted poetry is something to which even the most passionate avant-gardists in England frequently aspire.

Scannell has been firm in combing out what he considers the weaker poems in the seven previous volumes represented here (the first, *Graves and Resurrections*, from 1948, has gone altogether), and the instinct is right. *A Mortal Pitch* included three poems which have won a place in the affection of his admirers—"Posthumous Autobiography", "Gunpowder Plot" and "Four Dead Beats to a Bar"—but only the second of these wears really well. These early poems, well on into *The Masks of Love* (1960), were drawing something of an expected romantic veil, conventional for the period, over the real issues:

The leggy girls, whose sharp heels tore
My flimsy dreams, with laughter crushed
The flower at the heart of my lunar lust.

It's not as uncommon as is supposed for poets to find their true voice in middle age, and by the time he dons the persona of "Simon Frailman", Scannell has it splendidly:

An ashen dawn begins in Simon's mouth.
The conscious day unglues his sleep to drop

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This is the first detailed, thoughtful, "inside" account of a system of thought whose appeal is perennial and a set of organisations whose influence even now far outstrips their size. The Theosophical movement was more than an American phenomenon. In time, Yeats, Joyce, Kandinsky, Mondrian, and even Gandhi were touched by it. The phrase "New Age" now often used to refer to "alternative" religions is a phrase directly out of Theosophy.

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Some broken recollections in his lap
And snigger with unsympathetic mirth.
He sees himself absurd, immodest, vain,
Swaying from maudlin right to left of wrath,
Exciting pursed contempt or nervous ruth,
His dignity, like trousers, fallen down.

The day, a soft groan, greys towards its end
Sustained by aspirin and Worcester sauce. . . .

He is the poet of the profound and *ordinary* fear of death, the bluff extrovert caught "Howling for Love", the Don Juan of middle age who has known war, and indeed inherited it, as "My Father's Face" makes poignantly clear:

Each morning, when I shave, I see his face,
Or something like a sketch of it gone wrong. . .

I do not mind because my mouth is not
That lipless hyphen, military, stern. . . .

In his haunting poem on exactly that theme, "My Father Sees Me", Robert Garioch treats the inheritance of physical resemblances with a much more unobtrusive subtlety, faultlessly juxtaposing then and now:

I beik about my cosy, bricht,
fluorescent electric warld.
He sees me yet, yon norland yarl;
I steik my shutters guid and ticht.

Scannell is more insistently rooted in the present moment. Once he has left the shaving mirror, he has a day to spend making vain phone calls, attending to his overdraft, suffering a public lavatory, and gravitating to a saloon bar. And yet, by one of those mysterious, inexorable and beneficent rules which govern the poetic composition of poets as practised and prolific as he is, when a compelling theme and a well-chosen form coincide, the result can be startlingly moving and beautiful, not at all ordinary. As often as not it's the war themes with Scannell—the finely-handled climax to the marching pentameters of "Walking Wounded", or the carefully modulated half-rhymes of "The Soldier's Dream" where he goes over the ground of a famous war poem of Keith Douglas with (dare one say it?) more compassion and more gripping effect.

UNLIKE SCANNELL'S, GAVIN EWART'S has not been a steady, uninterrupted progress: in *The Collected Ewart*, the gap in the middle—where the war broke in on the exuberant precocity of his 1930s writing and slowed him down to nine poems in six years—is really very long indeed. He is only back into his stride again when he reaches *Londoners*, the 1964 book—and nothing of what happened later could have been predicted from that. *Londoners* was a very tentative re-start, in a Betjemanesque vein, but in leisurely free verse: an informative topographical ramble through London scenes, from "Chelsea in Winter" to "Strawberry Hill":

About two thirds of what remains are Walpole's.
The later building—Lady Waldegrave's,
A rich attractive Jewess, blossomed out
In entertaining and Victorian splendour.
The legend says that Shaw,
Visiting the house long after she was dead,
Refused to enter her Blue Breakfast Room.
He said it was "vulgar".

Not calculated to make an impression on admirers of either Ted Hughes' *Lupercal* (1960) or Philip Larkin's *The Whitsun Weddings* (1964), let alone Ginsberg's *Howl* or Lowell's *Life Studies*, *Londoners* seems now, with some wisdom of hindsight and in the context of *The Collected Ewart*, to be rather less artless and casual than it looked. It reads like an assembling of backdrops for all those later (but not much later) poems which people such scenes with grotesquely authentic inhabitants of our own time: ad agency monsters, house party cads, "the whole satirical setup." It was as if Ewart had not felt sure enough to pick up the threads where he had dropped them (though among the war poems, highly characteristic pieces like "Officers' Mess" and "Oxford Leave" were pointing the way, and could almost have been written 30 years later), but needed to recreate his world before he could recover his voice.

Just two years later, *Pleasures of the Flesh* is really very different. The later Ewart begins here, in a substantial collection which takes up and develops the themes and styles of his very early work, the brilliant and artfully-fashioned squibs of "Phallus in Wonderland." The key poem is no doubt "The Muse":

A boy was kissing me left right and centre
But something nasty crept into his quatrains.
I left for thirty years. I haven't changed
Though he's grey at the edges. Now I'm back
We live together in uneasy joy.

My lovely mouth; his bitter tainted kiss. . . .

Ewart is now the shyly outrageous poet daring to voice the hidden thoughts of urban man (scandalous ruminations, he says in *All My Little Ones*, which are actually in the mind of everybody except Mrs Whitehouse), and defining an area of decency in the midst of a cityscape of meretriciousness and violence. The disgust can be almost Swiftian, as in "Variation on a Theme of A. Huxley":

See them revel in their beer and their beastliness,
Egged on by sherry, the bit between their teeth,
Ginned up for chambering and wantonness,
As round a hot frilled leg they garter a parsley
wreath.

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Or hilarious, in "The Spirokeet":

The Spirokeet is a terrifying brightly-coloured
bird with a flesh-tearing beak,
It spends a lot of time in the palm trees
squawking and spouting Greek.
It can curdle the blood-stream and shut
teenagers up in clinics,
It reads Ibsen in the original and its friends are
all old cynics.

A point often forgoten about Ewart is that under the often exuberantly Rabelaisian surfaces, or between the elaborate jokes, there is a committed seriousness. There is joy in the nailing down of the "Office Primitive" ("Me likum girlum. Hatum work. / Smokum. Drinkum. Strokum pussy.") and the caveat against "Literary Unions", but there is also uneasiness, and more behind "The Argument for the Benevolent God" or sonnets like "At the Villa Madeira", about a famous murder:

So I sit here, in a comfortable chair, waiting
for the three bangs on the head with a wooden
mallet
that will auction me, as it were, to Eternity.
I wear my long nightcap (nearly a bottle of
whisky)
each night—and, later, a conventional Counsel
will call me a mari complaisant, *something not*
very nice.
But really I neither know nor care what they get
up to.
I was successful and now I'm very depressed.

We get on well enough, with friendliness.
The times are bad (the times are always bad),
I sleep downstairs. We drink a lot—that's true.
I'm 67, she's 38, and he's 18.
These are all dangerous ages. Hypocrites in wigs
will make us ogres, who prove the power of love.

Ewart is among the most prolifically ingenious poets we have: his sense of the right form is infallible, his jokes are invariably excellent, his feet planted firmly in recognisable experience. But in all his later books he has also used the comic as a means of stating views—simple, no-nonsense, compassionate opinions—and it would be insensitive not to notice the lacings of humane wisdom, even of moral severity, which go down with the draughts of scabrous humour.

BY MY RECKONINGS, *Moortown* [4] brings us up to date with the many, uncollected and various, poems of Ted Hughes printed or broadcast during

[4] *Moortown*. By TED HUGHES. Faber, £5.25.

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the 1970s—when each new book (*Crow, Season Songs, Gaudete, Cave Birds* and *Remains of Elmet*) was itself a self-contained work. *Moortown* contains the *Prometheus on his Crag* sequence and *Adam and the Sacred Nine*, two sets of poems which run parallel to *Crow* in their use of mythological inspiration and incantatory cadences; a large section of poems (of many years, in fact?) brought together under the title *Earth-numb*; and the title-sequence, which relates to his experiences as a full-time farmer in Devon in the earlier years of the decade. Now that they are all together, chronology seems less important than it used to: Hughes has, when writing outside huge set-enterprises like the verse-novel structure of *Gaudete* or the grand and elaborate landscape panorama of *Remains of Elmet*, settled for a rapid, urgent manner of writing which leaves the form to be determined by the subject—so that the poems are (very nearly) all of a piece, set down at white heat under the pressure of living and working in the terrain which stirred them, relying on a vivid interaction of words and natural objects to produce a meaning. Thus, in "Coming down through Somerset", the accumulation of details in shortish sentences will require some sort of conclusive climax to marshal it all into shape; the last word will have to be said about the dead badger, but what *sort* of last word?

Flies, drumming,
Bejewel his transit. Heatwave ushers him hourly
Towards his underworlds. A grim day of flies
And sunbathing. Get rid of that badger.
A night of shrunk rivers, glowing pastures,
Sea-trout shouldering up through trickles.
Then the sun again
Waking like a torn-out eye. . . .

In the end, the creature is nailed down, in the mind, in the poem:

I stand
Watching his stillness, like an iron nail
Driven, flush to the head
Into a yew post. Something
Has to stay.

It's a triumphant conclusiveness when it comes, but in many poems in this long—and never less than compelling—collection, the hammer seems to me to be missing the nail, or falling too hard, too insistently. Certainly the *Moortown* sequence itself is the best part of the book; but is it an accident that the best individual poems, in or out of that sequence, seem to have something to do with an *unusual* challenge, a turn in a different direction? When it first appeared in the *New Statesman*, "Postcard from Torquay", with its sardonic, cool, "poised" look at the German yachtsman in the English port, seemed a different kind of Hughes:

He poised, in the wobbly mirror
Of the snapping puddles
And the curl-mouthed glances of the rabble
English,
Gazed over the sea's heroic bulge,

Then stalked off
In his minimal continental sportswear,
Commandant—at home
On the first morning of Occupation—

To arrange, with lofty carrying words,
His costly yacht's descent
Into that swell of tourist effluent
And holiday turds.

Here it stands out also, with an air of something unexpected to the poet himself, drawn almost involuntarily to apply the old vision to another scene. As does the very moving small group of poems about the dead farmer friend to whom the book is dedicated (most notably "A Memory"—with its calm and beautiful conclusion—and "Hands"), and the vision of the tramp before he is hustled out of the cathedral in "Here is the Cathedral":

Going in out of the rain
I met a dark figure in the doorway:

Shuffling on rotten feet in rotten shoes
The whuffling wino with simplified face
Outsize R.A.F. greatcoat, trailing tatters,
Dragged lower by the black unlabelled bottle
In his pocket, was asking for something. A
whimper.
A paw red as if sore, oily and creased,
Muffled some request.

PETER SCUPHAM'S[5] and Leslie Norris's[6] new volumes confirm the contrast between Hughes' and most "nature" poetry now being written. The earlier Hughes books briefly drew other poets in their wake to reappraise natural forces in violent and arresting terms; there was something of it even in Norris's wry and essentially gentle writing. But with *Water Voices* any of that has gone:

Stepping delicately, the ponies, palominos,
Yellower than cream, smooth as butter, as bright
As the swags of ragwort they step among.

Stones in the river Brân, rounded as bubbles,
Limestone and sandstone tumbled from Fwng
and Cedny,
And brilliant shallow water over them.
"Ponies"

[5] *Summer Palaces*. By PETER SCUPHAM. Oxford University Press, £3.00.
[6] *Water Voices*. By LESLIE NORRIS. Chatto/Hogarth, £3.50.

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All of these poems "step delicately", in the way of an older, really a Georgian tradition; and it's difficult not to feel, however skilfully it's done, that the vein has been worked out. Here, as in his earlier books, Norris writes best where he is most personally engaged with the landscapes and the people he describes: encountering a "mad boy" in Maine ("'Sure, there were mountains Monday/— today there ain't mountains!' / The island stopped where he pointed, / His hand wiped out Mount Cadillac"), meeting a "Welshman" in Seattle, salmon fishing, contemplating "Lear at Fifty":

through the limpet hours
I've walked the fields as if on a cliff's edge,
The idea of flight in me, and seen my

Friends, myself, all strong, governing men,
turned
Sticks, turned tottering old fools.
The last sun in its blaze brings yellow light
To everything, walls, windows, water;
A false warmth. In the morning some old man
will start
To sweep his leaves to a neatness.

Peter Scupham's *Summer Palaces* exemplifies another way again of treating nature in our time: receiving and restructuring sensation, in fastidiously-crafted poems that evoke a human significance; as with "Wild Grass":

a speechless city
Where threads of life are plied into a sampler.
Errands are run by the quick-dying creatures,

Each movement bright and urgent as the
call-sign
Of child and bird tapping their counterpoint
Against the clock, the poppy-head's oblivion.

Listen to the soft thresh of their ground-bass,
Time and the wild grass working, this way, that
way,
Their tingling feather-heads, their cutting blades.

It is possible to imagine the violence that Hughes (who has written about gnats and shrews as well as hawks) would see in such a scene, or the mellower reflections it would stir in Leslie Norris, or the exuberant liberties Norman MacCaig would take with it (see "Intrusion of the Human" in his new book[7]). Scupham thinks and "plies" his metaphysical concerns into such a landscape, in a poetry that is compressed and arcane, that requires several readings and rewards the effort. I sense a games-playing with the furniture of nostalgia in some of the Cambridgeshire childhood poems, and a verbal artifice which overlays images and meanings in "The Tragedy Of" and "The Comedy Of", with their muffled Shakespearean echoes; and feel that both ought to be resisted. But "Pressed Flowers", "The Waiting Room", "The Box" and "The Gatehouse" all allow a stronger pressure of personal emotion to work its way into the pattern, and seem both more lucid and more moving. There is a beautifully evocative poem called "Halt":

a gas bauble in its Gothic cabin
Centres the sunlight. Now, that brightness moves
To open doors while shadows come to close them
Upon a sway into the tunnel's throat,
Each leather tongue tight on the stud, old smoke
Flocking its acrid wastes:

Readers who remember the days when train windows could be opened will recognise the "leather tongues" that secured them; the splendid exactness of this now recondite image illustrates the attractiveness, and the hurdles, to be found in *Summer Palaces*.

TOM PAULIN'S furniture in *The Strange Museum*[8] is the puritanical furniture of Ulster before 1969 (and since 1969), the "lost province"

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[7] *The Equal Skies*. By NORMAN MACCAIG. Chatto/Hogarth, £3.75.

[8] *The Strange Museum*. By TOM PAULIN. Faber, £3.50.

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under the "shadows of black tabernacles", a place where human relations are civil, grey and menacing and the rain washes hopeful grafts of English deism out of shape. As in his first volume, *A State of Justice*, Paulin writes with a muted kind of lyricism; you need to listen fairly hard to register the ironies and the (unresigned) sorrow in

this desert air
Which turns the grace of being naked
Into a sour shame that makes us gaze
Away, guilty lovers who prefer
To think our acts had innocence.
"The Noon of Bodies"

In this shortish collection there is variety, but the poems make a cumulative rather than an individual impression; with exceptions like "Second-Rate Republics", where the images of clandestine love-making merge powerfully with a far background of political disturbance ("his face hardens like a photograph, / And in the distance she hears / The forced jubilance of a crowd / That is desolate and obedient") or "In the Meat-Safe", where this world of wryly-observed drabness is set out in jocularly angry and very telling detail:

Solemn gaberdines, they cherish
the sweat of broken wirelesses,
goose-pimples on zinc canisters,
pre-war electric razors, sticks
of worn shaving soap, bakelite
gadgets, enemas, ration cards,
contraceptive coils that once fed
safe passions in colourless rooms
chilled by utility furniture.

DEATH VALLEY[9] follows on a kind of travel-writing, in prose and verse, which flourished just after the Second World War and has died down during the 1960s and '70s: a "poetic" way of looking at scenes and people which influenced journalism but remained, at its best, *un*journalistic. Alan Ross senses his pen "crawling across space / Like a seismograph" ("West from Denver"); and his poems chart several journeys across North and Central America with absorbing particularity—it's a poetry of very rapid movement yet equally sharp-eyed observation, with a fine talent for catching the small, absolutely characteristic, features of a place; as with the "Homes of the Stars" in the California desert:

Under sky
Close as a roof, huge birds
Wheel on predatory patrols, the tongues
Of guard dogs the same
Bare pink as the sparse roses.

Ross has found a method which successfully accommodates everything from bars and racetracks to panoramic views of the cotton country of Louisiana, from an affectionate cameo of "Henry Miller in Retreat" in his "Palisades homestead" to the unknown "Mr Haftel at Palm Beach", assisted by his wife in the men's lavatories

as if talking a plane down,
"Go to town, Mr Haftel, go to town."

Staking out lively claims for poetry as a mode of travel-writing, *Death Valley* gives a new energy and validity to this useful and enjoyable *genre*.

THE HEART OF Anthony Hecht's *The Venetian Vespers*[10] is a dazzling trio of dramatic monologues: the title-poem, "The Grapes", and "The Short End." In their length and ambition they recall the monologues (mainly in women's voices) of Randall Jarrell; in procedure there is something of John Hollander, a very little of John Ashbery; in style and detail they are Hecht's and no one else's at all, extraordinary extensions of his talent which readers may be slower to accept than many of the shorter earlier poems which he now tends to dislike. That would be a pity. "The Venetian Vespers" (the poem) is dauntingly complex, sometimes arbitrarily so (I'm indebted to the Poetry Book Society Bulletin for the information that, at the outset, the protagonist is unconscious on a bathroom floor, and other readers may not have read Hecht's article therein). But at rereading it begins to take breathtaking shape as a kind of allegory of the New World finding in the Old World only *angst* and desolation where it yearned for affirmation and redemption. "The Grapes" is "spoken" by a Swiss chambermaid who senses, in the sudden apprehension of the physical properties of the fruit, "the sudden meaning of sidereal time"; she speaks for everyone who suddenly feels there is "nothing left but years", but she herself knows it as

What it must have felt like in that rubber boat
In mid-Pacific, to the sole survivor
Of a crash, idly dandled on that blank
Untroubled waste, and see the light decline,
Taper and fade in graduated shades
Behind the International Date Line—
An accident I read about in Time.

"The Short End" is the *pièce noire* of the three, a nightmarish descent into the "alive entombment" in alcohol and madness of an executive wife. I can't think there is a better poet than Hecht to take up where his distinguished contemporaries—Jarrell, Berryman, Lowell—left off. I can't think there is now a better living poet in America.

[9] *Death Valley*. By ALAN ROSS. London Magazine Editions, £3.00.

[10] *The Venetian Vespers*. By ANTHONY HECHT. Oxford University Press, £3.95.

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Sidney Hook's Trumpet

By Constantine FitzGibbon

TO REVIEW a book by a writer whom the reviewer regards as a bore and a fool is in itself a boring and a foolish undertaking, though an easy way of venting one's spleen and making a little money. Unfortunately the reverse does not apply. It is, for me, extremely difficult to review this collection of essays,[1] written between 1945 and 1978, since the style is, in general, above reproach for elegance and clarity, the subject matter important and handled with a thorough profundity, and the conclusions are, in the main, those that I myself have reached, not infrequently under the influence, at least in part, of Sidney Hook's earlier published writings.

It would be an impertinence, even if it were a possibility, to summarise Professor Hook's views more succinctly than he does himself in these brief essays. I shall nevertheless make an attempt so to do. He believes, explicitly, that the morality which leads to kindness, justice, and social well-being is based on the intelligence of the individual honestly applied to the problems that ceaselessly confront him both in his private and in his public life. With a respectful nod to Plato and Santayana, he does not believe that such a morality can be imposed by even the wisest philosopher-kings or aristocrats, but must derive from the people living in a society that is distorted neither by terror nor by nonsensical equalities of status. Freed from the myths of race or class, he believes that the people are capable of examining the facts about them ("scientifically" is his adverb) and of using their innate intelligence both to respect one another's rights and, where conflicting interests arise, to reach acceptable compromise. He states more than once that he regards himself, quite correctly, as a secular rationalist, a direct descendant of the French encyclopaedists; and like them he hates tyranny, though the tyrannies of his century are, of course, differently garbed from those of 1750. He would seem to admire the collective wisdom of the US "Founding Fathers" above that of any other group of men who have ever lived.

Sidney Hook is, therefore, and perhaps above all, an *homme de bonne volonté*, and surely no other man of good will would contest his conclusions. One can, however, criticise how, in this book, some of those conclusions are reached or, to be more exact, the solidity of the foundations upon which they are based. Every man must be, no matter how brilliant, a man of his age and, no matter how well read, must derive many of his ideas from earlier generations. The Jungian concept of the group unconscious can be over-emphasised, but every wave of immigrants to America, from the pilgrims on, brought with them a strong memory of the particular Europe from which they had fled. Of none is this more true than of the wave of Jewish refugees from the Czarist pogroms of 80 or 90 years ago. The quality that had enabled them to survive centuries of persecution was, in the long run, their intelligence: the cement which held them together as a social unit was their religion. In America this cement was no longer needed: indeed the concept of "the Melting Pot" made it in some ways undesirable. And second or third generations of American Jewish intellectuals frequently became atheists while retaining the intellectual integrity and prowess of their often rabbinical forbears. The destruction of Czarist tyranny in the Old Country caused some of them to embrace Marxism, and for many Russia had become too remote for them to see the inherent evil in Leninism. For some the very obvious crimes of Stalinism opened their eyes.

Sidney Hook passed through all this, more rapidly than most, and by 1937-8 was organising the Commission of Inquiry into the mock-legality of the Soviet "Show Trials"—and hence of the whole GULAG system—over which his great teacher, John Dewey, presided in Mexico. The evidence was compounded by what was happening in Spain. Since then, at the latest, it has been impossible for any honest man of good will to be a Communist, anywhere. Even in Marx's own dialectic of history, the Hitler-Stalin pact made perfect sense and should have taken no one by surprise.

Since I am writing *ad hominem*, I should declare my own position. In 1936, at the age of 17, I volunteered for the International Brigade, but was turned down for reasons of age. Two years later, thanks in large measure to the report of the Dewey Commission, I was and have remained a convinced anti-Bolshevik. On 3 September 1939, as a

[1] *Philosophy and Public Policy*. By SIDNEY HOOK. Southern Illinois University Press, $17.50; Transatlantic Book Service, £9.63.

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young American I volunteered to fight against Nazism and, presumably, its Soviet allies. Hitler's attack on the Moscow-Berlin Alliance ("cemented in blood") did not cause me to change my opinion that both systems were abominable and evil. Forty years later I think the same. Of bourgeois Western origin, I am proud to be on the same side as Sidney Hook and his peers. (I do not, however, share his apparent relative remnant of respect for Trotsky. A Trotskyist Russia might well have been more unpleasant than Stalin's, since Trotsky was at least as cruel besides being the cleverer of the two.)

WHAT PROFESSOR HOOK has inherited from the Western climate of the last century is his concept of "scientific truth." Marx, as we know, tried and failed to make a science out of history. The 19th-century scientists' faith lay in the immutability of "hard facts": if you asked the right question, you got the right answer. Since the powers of the human mind were, they thought, unlimited, it should be possible to build up such a vast store of precise knowledge as to know the exact and correct answer to any question anyone might ever ask. (Darwin did not share in this belief, but Huxley did.) They remembered that Newton had discovered the universal law of gravity: they forgot that Newton had then wondered why there should be such a thing as gravity at all. At the basis of it all was the accepted erroneous fact that matter is built up of solid atoms: the "electrification" of the atom only led to more complicated mathematics, and Einsteinian relativity made them more complex yet. But the "probability" theory of the micro-physicists made the absolute truth of any scientific statement suspect. This does not in itself invalidate Sidney Hook's search for truth, let alone his detection of lies and his surgical exposition of the careers of such as Lillian Hellman, Alger Hiss, and, more respectfully but no less thoroughly, Bertrand Russell; but it does mean a semantic and thence a philosophical reinterpretation. I would venture to suggest that had he devoted a little more attention to Bishop Berkeley and to Leibnitz and a little less to the Cartesians, he might have concluded that reality is not to be found in facts or things but rather in the relationships between them.

He is that rare phenomenon, a generous atheist, so generous that he gives space to Jacques Maritain to refute Hook's own theories about the bases of morality. This interchange alone makes the whole book worth reading, and it certainly cannot be summarised here. Sidney Hook is, as he says more than once, above all a pragmatist. Let us imagine a brilliant pragmatist who was born stone deaf. He will have read about music, even studied its laws and its history, but he will never have *heard* it. The weight of the evidence will have convinced this

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broad-minded pragmatist[2] that others have done so, but being honest he must state that for him music simply does not exist. It can therefore play no part in his vision of truth. Such is Sidney Hook's view of religion. His logic may here be open to questioning, but not his honesty.

IT IS RARE TO DETECT an error in such a writer, even more so a commonplace misquotation. In a letter, Lord Acton wrote: "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely." It appears here in its usual misquoted form, namely that power as such always corrupts. I should not engage in such nit-picking did Sidney Hook not make it abundantly plain that as a social democrat, he wishes to endow the people with as much power as possible: he certainly does not wish to make them as corrupt as possible, though he is of course well aware of electoral corruptibility. But then Acton would hardly have stood by, arms folded, watching his friend Gladstone grow steadily more corrupt year by year. It is a pity that this half-truth, which Acton wrote in a private letter, should be the only apophthegm of his that is ever quoted, and almost always inaccurately.

And what about Abraham Lincoln? In an outburst of admirable if inaccurate patriotism, Sidney Hook writes:

> "The democratic republic that was born in this hemisphere some two hundred years ago is the only political alternative ever devised to mediate, in Lincoln's phrase, 'between anarchy, on the one hand, and despotism on the other'. . . ."

Lincoln, just before his death, was certainly the most powerful man ever to have appeared upon the American scene: he was also almost certainly the least corrupt. But unlike Sidney Hook, Lincoln was neither a historian nor a moralist. Why did he, the President who presided over the bloodiest and perhaps the most anarchic civil war in modern history, make this strange boast save, perhaps, to flatter the electorate? What is more curious, why did Sidney Hook choose this quotation, among so many available, from a man whom he must surely admire above all others? From the Second Inaugural he could have taken the more famous words: "With malice towards none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right." This would have suited his meaning better, but perhaps he did not wish to intrude the Almighty into his argument, even via Lincoln, and of course he could not substitute the word "Science" for the word "God", even if his sense of humour had not forbidden this.

These criticisms are not, I hope, petty, but they should not be allowed to detract from a profound appreciation of a book that blows away a mass of cobweb verbiage concerning, primarily, the history of political ideas in the United States over the past forty or fifty years. Some of us had begun to fear that liberal thought in America had been eroded out of existence by the quote liberals unquote of the Eastern Seaboard and the me-too-ers of Academy generally. They long ago accepted the Communist use of the word "fascist" as not applying solely to the early advocates of Mussolini's autarchic rule over a corporate state, but to anyone they dislike ("Social-fascists" for Social Democrats, "Trotskyite-fascists" for Stalin's victims etc.), and even Sidney Hook falls into this neologism when he connects the Medieval Church with "ecclesiastical fascism." It has become usage so to describe those with whom we disagree for one reason or another. Should we apply it, for example, to those journalists and their friends who regard the United States Constitution as an unnecessary preamble to part of the First Amendment, who would weaken the self-confidence of the American people by turning the Watergate trivia into a non-stop commercial TV best-seller, who would . . . ? But the reader can complete the list himself, at the risk of crudely lumping all these phoney liberals together as "liberal-fascists."

Sidney Hook is a real liberal. Let us hope that this latest blast on his well-tuned trumpet will make at least some of their walls come tumbling down.

[2] See in ENCOUNTER (October 1975) Lewis Feuer's essay, "The Pragmatic Wisdom of Sidney Hook."

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IN THE MARGIN

A Riot & the Press

Zurich

THE aftermath to the Zurich rioting of the early summer takes on new proportions. The first consequences were serious and shocking enough. When was there last a riot on the sober and staid streets of a Swiss city? Could anybody remember any real trouble in these parts since Gessler challenged Wilhelm Tell to pierce the apple on his boy's head?

Well, the boys are not the same nowadays, and the games are quite different. A youthful army seemed to come out of nowhere, once in June and then again in July, uniting the alienated and the avant-garde, the hippies and the hooligans, in an orgy of destruction. The damage to the shops in the city centre looked like the mayhem of a thousand vandals. Bright glittering store-windows were smashed, hated consumer goods burned, clean shiny limousines overturned. The good burghers were aghast. The police were caught completely by surprise, and were wildly ineffective in their efforts to restore traditional law and order promptly. And what was it all in aid of ? Could the Zurich *jeunesse dorée*—or was it the youthful radical conscience of Europe's oldest democracy?—have been so deeply outraged by the decision to spend a hundred million Swiss francs on building a new Opera House? At any rate they stormed the old *Opernhaus*, hurled militant rocks into the orchestra pit, and painted their slogans over the stage—more camps for youth festivals, more subsidies for rock music, more attention to the real problems of an ailing Swiss culture.

The windows have long since been replaced on the elegant *Bahnhofstrasse*, and the fines for rowdyism paid. The police are to be retrained for next time and more effective crowd control. Finance experts are looking at the budget of the new Opera House, possibly to trim it a bit around the fancy edges. The first shock is over; but the complications, as I say, are continuing to mount.[1]

THE MOST flamboyant of the open quarrels which have been raging in an otherwise very quiet Zurich scene involves the Press itself. Journalists have been quick to pick up the issue, and "in-depth investigations" have been concentrated on the incompetent "youth policies" of the City Fathers. Their record was "empty of civic achievement", and when its bankruptcy was registered they reacted "hysterically, brutally." The complaints ranged from the usual difficulties which reporters encounter with the heavily-manned police-lines when they try to get through to cover their stories, to the special pressures on editors and publishers from certain quarters "on high" in order to get a favourable slant in the next day's paper.

The Press itself is getting as much criticism as it is giving. Did it sensationalise the news, overplay the demonstrations and riots, encourage the excited overheated temperaments of peripheral youth groups? Weren't the headlines and stories and editorials altogether one-sided, exaggerated, provocative?

In the tangle of argument and polemic two interesting themes emerged, almost crackling in their newness on the old, conservative, Zurich cultural-political stage. First, was the traditional state monopoly of radio and television still tenable? Secondly, if the pluralism of "many voices" is desirable for a viable democracy, was there not a new danger to the basic "freedom of the press" from organised pressure-groups who would like "difficult" stories angled, or touched up, or even censored? The most dramatic development centred around the issue of one of the largest Swiss daily newspapers, the *Tagesanzeiger* of Zurich, which was under attack for its "sympathies with mindless juvenile violence." Indeed the weekly organ of Swiss industrialists issued a call to the various

[1] As I read proofs (mid-September), a new wave of riots has broken out. I wonder whether the Zurich burghers saw it coming—the cryptic graffiti on walls everywhere announced, "*We're on Our Way Back from Summer Holidays!*..." Refreshed and suntanned, the youthful sub-proletariat outmanoeuvred the police in yet another violent outburst of vandalic protest.

The *Café Odéon* (James Joyce sat here) has been completely smashed and is closed. The police concede that the rioters have cleverly revised their street strategy and tactics to contain the offensive of tear-gas and water-cannon. Small wonder that in the general confusion and desperation the editors of the Swiss weekly, *Die Weltwoche*, turned to the Police-Chief of West Berlin for advice and instructions; especially impressive, if not immediately applicable, is the *Polizeipräsident*'s theory of "*Steinwurfdistanz*", or the perils of the stone's-throw no-man's-land between the "*Bullen*" and the "urban guerrillas."

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advertising executives to "give a thought" to the matter of the future placing of ads. It made the point clearer by reminding its readers of the year-old boycott of the *Tagesanzeiger* on the part of the Swiss automobile importers because of their objections to the hostile "transportation and traffic" articles the paper had been publishing.

Then came the first blow. One of the big local advertisers, the Globus department store, announced that it was cutting by half its six-figure budget for advertising in the *Anzeiger* during the next season. Then came the counter-protest—500 "*Medien-schaffenden*" (i.e. editors, journalists, radio and TV people) marched to the Münsterplatz to defend the rights to "information and independent opinion."

Soon the argument was in the hands of the dialecticians and the lawyers. Do advertisers have a freedom to place their ads as they see fit? Does the press have a right to be advertised in unconditionally? If so, shouldn't it also have a right to be subscribed to, and even read, unconditionally? But then if a reader doesn't like what he reads he is surely free to stop buying? . . . and shouldn't the advertiser be equally free to stop buying space? And what about those papers, whose editors or publishers "control" what should and should not go into the actual text of an advertisement, insisting on their special right to edit, improve, and indeed censor?

The trouble with the press, it was argued, was that whenever it is in trouble then "freedom of the press" suddenly becomes mortally endangered. Who doesn't regret when a good or interesting paper goes under because of lack of readers or advertising income? This happened here not so long ago when the once valuable *Die Tat* went into decline and finally closed down. "Sad", one editor said to me, "that the variety of opinion becomes somewhat narrowed, but does 'freedom of the press' call for the paper to be maintained? How? By forcing readers to read it or buy it, say, by some kind of arranged 'bulk buying'? by forcing industry to subsidise it, willy-nilly, by compulsory advertising? Or by, *horribile dictu*, getting the state to give official funds to keep it financially afloat? . . ."

THE CASE OF the *Anzeiger* is a little different. One of the largest and most prosperous of Swiss daily newspapers, it did undergo a change of political line a few years ago. These things are always an unclear mixture of ideology and circulation strategy. There was a large reservoir of new readers "somewhere on the Left", and if they could be had the gains might well set off the probable losses in advertising income which could be calculated or certainly expected. The risk was taken; and it looked like a fairly safe bet until the battle of the Opera House split the city into ideologically armed camps.

To be sure, no press anywhere in the free West is without its daily conflicts with bureaucrats, political parties, lobbies and pressure groups. Most of them are resolved by a certain amount of fairness and balance, by letters-to-the-Editor or the publication of statements giving the other side: in a few cases, now and then, by apologetic explanations, freely (if embarassedly) offered or juridically enforced. A many-sided discussion or debate could well have resolved the *Tagesanzeiger* crisis; after all, no company or institution was personally involved; it was not a matter of libel, honour, damages and public apologies. The *Globus* people could well have put their standpoint to the liberal-left readership of the *Tagesanzeiger*, trying to establish the wicked folly of smashing their shop windows in order to change the city's musical subsidies. The editors could have tried to persuade the business community with arguments (even if well-known and by now a bit conventional) to the effect that a lonely crowd of decent young persons, alienated from the consumerism of the most affluent society in the world, sometimes turns to rough excessive protest "in order to tell us something. . . . " The alternative to such an open debate is a perspective of pitched battles in the city streets, steel-helmeted police armed to the teeth, and a shambles along the Limmat as if a small hurricane had struck. A little less talk about the democratic virtues of two-sided argument and mutual tolerance and a little more practice would have defused the situation which has the makings of a journalistic "class struggle."

Editors are, of course, reluctant to "negotiate" editorial space under the threat of an economic boycott of their essential financial life-line. How can the threat of withdrawal of advertisements and their income, they ask, be considered a legitimate weapon of democratic conflict? Would it be considered legitimate for us, in self-defence, to call upon our readers and political friends to boycott (or otherwise indicate their ill-will) certain firms, shops, and businesses? The Swiss Cartel Commission will soon be deciding the case of Automobile Importers' refusal to advertise in publications held to be opposed to the best interests of the horseless carriage. Whatever the decision, it may well exacerbate a situation which, like all tragic conflicts, pits right against right, freedom against freedom, harassed party against injured interest.

FOR THERE ARE NO absolutely clear guide-lines for press freedom in an open commercial society, crowded with competitive and colliding forces. What the Swiss have been caught up in (and they are certainly not alone in the West) is, to use Daniel Bell's phrase, "the cultural contradictions of capitalism." But since no other social or economic

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system has ever produced anything remotely like the cultural freedoms which we enjoy, we will just have to learn to live with, and indeed even to flourish under, the difficulties. The alternative—"the cultural contradictions of socialism"—has led everywhere, from Moscow to Havana to Peking, to a monotonous State- and Party-controlled press which doesn't have the slightest trouble from readers, editors, advertisers, or any living breathing soul.

It will, no doubt, be of small consolation to the editors of the *Tagesanzeiger* to be told that their adventurous editorial boldness will only be costing them a little money, where, say, the editors of the Chinese Wall Newspapers have had to pay with ten-year jail sentences. Western journalism can only make its way by making itself pay. As the rich Swiss well know, the struggle over money, even in the noblest causes, is never easy or pretty or safe.

Bismarck Herring

Hamburg

FOR all its ruthlessness, I was pleased that none of my German friends who read Martin Esslin's critique of German reporting of English affairs ["A German Correspondent Reports from London", ENCOUNTER, May] felt very much put out. "It was a faultless performance", remarked C.F., "and should really serve to give us all a lesson in intellectual humility . . . But I remain troubled by one, perhaps unintentional, implication. Namely, that English reporting of German affairs is somehow more conscientious, more informed, more accurate. Are you in London truly free from those cultural contradictions which cause small prejudices to be writ large?

"The other day I happened to see on the screen of BBC-TV's distinguished Channel 2 a long and interesting film about the Brothers Grimm, the miraculous universality of their fairy tales, etc. etc. It was all quite well done. But at the very end I was astonished to read a curious postscript to the effect: *'Jacob Grimm died in 1861. In 1861 began Bismarck's 'Blood-and-Iron' policy to reunify Germany.'*

"Now what was this supposed to mean? In the first place Jacob Grimm did not die in 1861, but in 1863. In the second place, Bismarck was beginning, if anything, his career as a Prussian diplomat in St Petersburg.

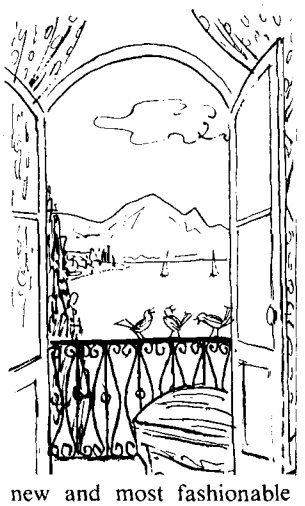
"As for the famous quotation about blood and iron—which actually was *'Eisen und Blut'*—it was first used by Bismarck on the 30th of September 1862, although if one wanted to be pedantic one would have to ascribe the disagreeable combination to the ancient formula of Marcus Fabius Quintilianus in 70 A.D.

"But all this is not the heart of the matter. Why paste such an absurd (forget about the inaccuracies) and totally irrelevant postscript on to the Grimm film at all?

"Well, I imagine that your BBC chaps, no freer from national cultural complexes than the rest of us, took a last look at the sweet fairy-tale of a story and said to themselves: 'Look, for some fifty-five minutes we have broadcast pleasantries about two good Germans. Don't you think that calls for a little balance at the end? . . .' So does the bitter come to the sweet. Even if the iron-and-blood bit has to be dragged in grimly like some Bismarck herring across the trail. . . ."

Reading in the Rain

Paris



THE FRENCH mind has a legendary reputation for subtlety, but I am impressed that the correlation between weather and culture has now been finely worked out. Not with some grand theory of determinist interactions between society and the elements, but on a very practical basis through the good offices of that most new and most fashionable French penchant for good business and profitable commerce.

The summer weather has so far been miserable, and the French book trade has never had it so good. Even a late spell of sunshine and a sudden heat wave can't spoil things any more; the books have been bought, the shelves have been emptied.

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How different from that catastrophic summer season of 1976—so hot, so dry, so sunny, hardly a hardback got oil-stained by bronze-tanning cream from June through September. Then the hard-hit farmers and peasants demanded and received "catastrophe help", but suffering under the same causality the publishers and booksellers were left to swelter alone. Now that the rains have come, and remained, the current season has proved to be a bright and happy one. And all this without resorting to that old, cold and calculating strategy of the "Holiday Best-seller", where at the end of the season each Paris house is competing with all the others in cutting prices and remaindering titles of vapid little nothings.

Still, what one has to put out is a book for *les vacances*, with at least 500 pages of text, readably printed in fairly large type, and with a shiny (washable) jacket-cover; and it need not necessarily be an escapist novel. It just has to be right for the season, has somehow to be chic for July and August. Paris has a knowing way with these things.

Launching what can only be called his "summer collection", one famous Paris publisher almost beat the weather-man to the point—all the books involved in the presentation were offered under the slogan: "*Un livre pour tous les temps....*" Whatever it was taken to mean (erratic meteorology? literary immortality?) they had the book right here, come rain or shine, books for all seasons, for all time. Why narrow yourself to detective stories and light tales of adventure? Works of history and sociology, economics and semiology looked just right for wet days and chilly nights. The major critics of the book-pages and literary supplements were all happily carried along, for they are only human too; bad weather, and not bad character, made them play the game. Astonishing, what the public was recommended to buy, as they packed their holiday things (not forgetting umbrellas)! One columnist for a Paris newspaper, usually concerned with the lighter side of life, actually wrote that he would be taking along an 800-page volume of the philosophy of Martin Heidegger; Wittgenstein was a summer favourite with several others; a number rushed to recommend the second volume of the new collected edition of Franz Kafka and some of the ancient classics (all to be "reread", of course). When the game was over, I think Plato had most of the trumps, although a trick or two was won by Lacan and even Louis Althusser.

AS I WRITE, critics and readers alike are making their bedraggled way back from rained-out resorts. One would be curious for a few post-summer late results in the holiday reading league—how far did they get into Heidegger, and could it be that Lacan was edged out in the last minute by Le Carré? But what matters most for publishers is not whether a book is read, but that it is bought and paid for. The holiday season has been, *merci bien*, quite wonderful.

Zamyatin's Mask

Bonn

IT WAS, I thought, useful and important to put the Afghanistan story in the long perspective (Kohlschuetter's vivid dispatches in the August ENCOUNTER). But, as I find here, in the effort to maintain the battered spirit of *détente* in Europe, there is a tendency to think of Kabul as a far-away place of which we know nothing.... Here in Bonn there is strenuous activity in order to keep German-Soviet friendship warm, so that the lucrative Ruhr-Russian trade can go on, so that Germans in East and West can move a little more freely over the barbed-wire frontiers, so that BRD-Schmidt and DDR-Honecker can continue their game of "national summitry." But Afghanistan, in one form or another, keeps on rearing its head intrusively.

The other day a young CDU-Member of the *Bundestag* named Juergen Todenhoefer accepted an invitation from some Afghan guerrilla groups to accompany them across the Pakistan border and spend a few days looking at their resistance movement and partisan warfare. For one reason or another this especially infuriated the highest circles in Moscow, possibly because (as is bruited about) Chairman Brezhnev is preparing a new Moscow-Bonn diplomatic offensive. In any event we now know from the dispatches of the West German Minister in Moscow how Leonid Zamyatin, the information chief of the Central Committee, reacted to the news of the Todenhoefer expedition. According to Minister Huber (who found the reaction "unacceptable" and registered an official protest), Zamyatin was beside himself when he noted that the Red Army was exercising such "brutality" against the Afghan population as almost to amount to "genocide"!

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The MP was guilty of "illegal entry", was telling "fairy tales", and should have been caught and turned over to the proper authorities for "flogging." No, on second thought, he should have been executed, simply shot.

Zamyatin, it should be recalled, is a well-known figure in West Germany. He was the official spokesman here in Bonn on the several state visits of Brezhnev. But his temper is also well known; and unforgettable was his press conference in Munich in October 1977 when a Russian emigrant turned up and put it to him that eight of his relatives had been murdered by the Soviet régime. A furious Zamyatin snapped: "I'm only sorry it wasn't nine! . . ."

When the West German Minister, Huber, lodged his diplomatic protest with Bondarenko, the chief of the European section in the Moscow Foreign Office, he was told that if the remarks against Todenhoefer had actually been made, then it was regrettable. Valentin Falin, who devoted himself to winning German popularity when he was the Soviet ambassador in Bonn, could only say that it was all "a misunderstanding." Bondarenko argued that one shouldn't get so emotional over a joke. . . .

The butt of the "joke", *Bundestag*-member Todenhoefer, charged with "illegal entry", made the pertinent crack: "The only ones who are illegally present in Afghanistan are 100,000 soldiers of the Red Army." The official Soviet diplomacy, he went on to say, wears a mask, and every once in a while "the mask slips a little. . . ."

Thus, Afghanistan *is* far away, and we do know very little about it, but it keeps on offering instructive lessons to free Europe on the dangers of a cunning Kremlin diplomacy which knows—at least most of the time—how to hide its face.

Melvin J. Lasky

Things moved are, usually, better

Things moved are usually better.
Like earth ploughed and smelling and shaped
brown and sweet, and the sidewise mouth of the child
moving and smelling, feeding, the new and the soft.
And also the branch shook in the wind
revealing a sun the midday eyes had not known
or seen for that matter. Indeed even the
comet tail of the plane is better than just
the plane, it is numbered among movements
of stars, and not merely as flight.

But what of the heart? It too is a thing.
If it were not to open and close, to move
we too could not see, movement, or any thing
turning or stirring or sucking or given
the odd and beautiful life of the moved.
Yet as it moves and knocks and now my tongue
moves in a figure, it is not better.
It is sour and bitter and smells as if sky
were not there and is numbered as fear.
It's a fault in the heart it moves not merely as thing.

Harvey, you showed King Charles how the valves pumped
and moved the heart, discovered a figure of life,
remaking all medieval romance had seen
as a figure for feeling. Feeling feeding on life
is the moving thing, not perhaps life as it moves.
Earth and flesh moving, forgive us this fear.

Gay Clifford

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DISCUSSION

The Double Vision of Han Suyin

On the Character of a Trimmer—By SIMON LEYS

"After all, people can change, can't they?"
MAO ZEDONG[1]

MADAME HAN SUYIN is very popular in the West. In China (except among some bureaucrats of the Propaganda Department) she is unloved, and nowadays most Chinese intellectuals, artists and writers will frown if you so much as mention her name. Is this an excessively harsh response on the part of the survivors of the "Cultural Revolution"? The publication of her latest book, *My House Has Two Doors*,[2] provides the opportunity to answer this question through a retrospective examination of her work.

Madame Han Suyin likes to take her imagery from the natural world, and many of her books have fine titles—*And the Rain My Drink* (1956); *The Mountain Is Young* (1958); *The Morning Deluge* (1972), and so on. In order to put her latest book into perspective I was inquisitive enough to leaf through a few of her other recent publications—*China In The Year 2001* (London, 1967); *Asia Today* (Montreal-London, 1969); and *Wind In The Tower* (London, 1976). In the passages quoted below I have re-transcribed the Chinese names into *pinyin*, and abbreviated the references to *2001*, *Asia*, and *Wind*, respectively. During those hours of reading I often found myself floundering, almost drowning in the roaring tide of the author's powerful imagination, but at the same time I acquired a firmer grasp of the positively *cosmic* quality of her overall vision. It is a fertile chaos, a polyphonic coexistence of opposites, a lyrical alternance, a grand dialogue between Yin and Yang. After all, Madame Han Suyin has readily informed us that her house has two doors, and her work resembles those clothes you can buy with two different patterns and colours so that depending on your mood or the weather you can wear them with the outside in or the inside out. I believe that in the trade they are called "reversible models": a useful notion, especially for people fond of turning their coats. Her work, thus, displays two different faces simultaneously, heads as well as tails; the subtle counterpoint can only be properly appreciated if one takes the trouble to put them into stereoscopic focus. Like this, for example:

[1] I discovered this quotation from Mao, *not* in the selected works of the Great Teacher, but in a book by Madame Han Suyin. Since Madame Han Suyin's latest book puts inverted commas around a remark I never made, and attributes it to me, I am afraid that this thought too should be taken with a grain of salt.

[2] *My House Has Two Doors*. By HAN SUYIN. Jonathan Cape, £9.50.

Heads

THE GREAT EMPHASIS in this revolution is on the use of reason, criticism, debate and not on force. (*2001*, p. 193) What is sought is not the physical punishment of the evil-doers, but awareness, rallying and unity.... This experiment bears watching. (*2001*, p. 200) Through the Great Cultural Revolution, the remaking of man is being attempted for one quarter of the world.... It is Mao Zedong who has seen the problem in its universal terms, the Remaking of Man. (*2001*, p. 246)

Tails

PASSING THROUGH the street, I catch sight, here and there, of barbed wire atop walls. Probably temporary prisons. Each organisation, factory, university has its own detention area. (Doors, *p. 513) In the "investigation sessions", Luo Ruiging was pushed through a window and his leg was broken. He received no medical care for his injury. He was carried to his public humiliation in January '67, in a large basket, and had to crawl on the floor, dragging his broken leg behind him.... He Long was treated most savagely. He was diabetic and was refused medical care. He was beaten regularly, being first wrapped in a blanket so that the welts would not show.* (Doors, *p. 402) Xia Yan was beaten, his leg broken, and he was refused medical care.* (Doors, *p. 471)*

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THE SURPRISE of the year 1968 was to see Chinese techniques take entirely original forms and realize even with the Cultural Revolution and its upheavals in process, standards equivalent to, or higher than those in international use. (*Asia*, p. 102)

PHENOMENAL INNOVATIONS are announced, all proclaimed to be the result of the Cultural Revolution. But I know that a good many were started before the Cultural Revolution . . . all of them are claimed to be due to workers' ingenuity, but I know that most of them are due to scientists. (Doors, *p. 508)*

FAR FROM BEING an absurdity, proceeding from madness, or authoritarianism, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is a logical, needful, necessary event, the only way . . . to give the working class the leadership, to give the masses the largest possible democratic voice. (*Asia*, p. 71)

HOW WAS IT possible to remain sane with the perpetual noise, the blaring and the shouting and the screaming and the singing? (Doors, *p. 422) I was extremely nervous and suffered from fits of depression, because of the Cultural Revolution.* (Doors, *p. 477) In July and August 1967, everything seemed to go crazy in China.* (Doors, *p. 480) The Mayor, Vice-Mayor and Party officials of Shanghai were hauled to criticism meetings, paraded through the city. . . . All over China such displays took place, designed to strike terror. . . . The writer Zhao Shuli was taken from village to village through the north-west. He died of the ordeal.* And all that in the name of democracy. (Doors, *pp. 461–62; the words in roman appear only in the French version,* La Moisson du phénix, *p. 83)*

AND FOR THOSE who still think that there will be "Stalinist" purges and liquidations, I now quote from *The Red Flag*: ". . . Even diehard capitalist-roaders should be allowed a way out. . . ." A way out, in the great traditions of Chinese humanism. No liquidations, no massive purges. . . . (*Asia*, pp. 73–74)

THERE WERE figures of 90,000 casualties in Sichuan and a good many too in Yunnan. Guanghzhou was ugly with summary executions by rival factions (Wind, *pp. 316–317) . . . "A reign of gratuitous terror—horrifying" said others. In every city and quarter it was different: from harassment to murder, from endless interrogation to beating to death. By October, in Peking alone, 86,000 "counter-revolutionaries" had been discovered. In Shanghai 400,000 "bourgeois and capitalists" were removed from their houses.* (Doors, *p. 456)*

OF COURSE [the Cultural Revolution] was gruelling . . . a number of mistakes were made . . . but taken all in all, it is certain that violence was not condoned nor was it on the large scale which Western reports made it out to be. . . . (*Asia*, p. 72) It fell to Jiang Qing to denounce the Ultra-Left, and she was the first to do so. . . . Jiang Qing was the deputy head of the Cultural Revolution Group, in no sense responsible for their depredations for she was the first to fight against them. . . . (*Wind*, pp. 316–17)

JIANG QING'S speech to the Red Guards in Peking on 22nd June 1967, aroused unprecedented fighting . . . and provoked many deaths (Moisson, *p. 168) [This paragraph which should appear on p. 513 in* Doors *was deleted from the English edition and is to be found only in the French version.] [Jiang Qing] then used a phrase which . . . was the green light for continued violence at a time when the Red Guards were attacking army garrisons and raiding arsenals.* (Doors, *p. 475)*

DIRECT COLLISION between China and the USA is now almost inevitable; the military-industrial complex of the USA wants to attack, to drop the first bomb over China. This will be the signal for total war which knows no boundaries. (*2001*, p. 170)

THERE WOULD not be a war between America and China now. Mao's faith that the two peoples, the Americans and the Chinese, would inevitably become friends again one day, expressed so often through the years, had now seen fruition. (Wind, *pp. 366–67)*

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THE GREAT Proletarian Cultural Revolution tries to abolish servility and unthinking obedience, docile tools and slavishness. "Dare to think, to act and criticize." Not 700 million docile tools, but 700 million original thinkers, "700 Million Mao Zedongs" is the aim. (*Asia*, p. 71) The core of the problem of building a socialist system without exploitation . . . is to change the content of motivation, to provide through continuous and painstaking socialist education, through rectification campaigns and movements, a change of behaviour within the soul of man. This conversion has been attempted before, in religious systems, but not with the thoroughness of a science, which is Mao Zedong's treatment of this psychological remaking. (*2001*, p. 186)

*"I'LL GO CRAZY if I see one more Mao religious service", said Richard Hung to me. . . . He had come upon a dawn ceremony—a courtyard full of people swinging their bodies in ecstasy in front of a large portrait of Mao Zedong. This was the morning invocation, asking Chairman Mao for directives: rocking the body, chanting, dancing with "offer hearts" gestures, calling upon Mao, in a litany of praise ("great, great, great") for his orders for the day. Then there was the opening of the little red book, and the quotation on the page fallen upon was the answer. . . . "It's like the Holy Rollers, and consulting the Bible for answers, and the Moral Rearmament people who speak to God", said Richard. He did not think he could put up with it any longer. (*Doors, *p. 497)*

LIN BIAO'S appearance does not indicate a military takeover, but the continuation of the revolutionary tradition, in which it is the function of the People's Liberation Army to train cadres and successors to the Revolution. . . . The possibility of a revisionist coup against Mao's leadership was removed by Lin Biao reasserting the political and ideological primacy of Mao Zedong thought in the army. The Chinese therefore do not regard the ascension of Lin Biao as a takeover, but as the reassertion of ideological primacy over purely military ambitions. (*2001*, pp. 191–92)

FIVE OUT of the 13 military regions were under Lin Biao's appointees. . . . Six of his followers and his wife were ensconced in the Military Affairs Committee. He had a web of his own appointees in some important Revolutionary Committees. There was a dominance of military personnel in the Central Committee. . . . Lin Biao's dominance represented a tendency ingrained in the minds of the Chinese people: the acceptance of authoritarianism. . . . The Lin Biao affair pinpointed the danger of recrudescent warlordism. . . . Lin Biao, his wife and his son plotted to launch a military coup d'état, *and perhaps to assassinate Mao. (*Wind, *pp. 341, 377, 376, 346)*

THE ROLE of the People's Liberation Army during the Cultural Revolution has been very important. The army was given the following orders: If hit, do not retaliate; if shot at, do not fire back; and do not lose your temper under any circumstances. . . . Because the soldiers never fired at any group (though at times shot at by saboteurs . . .) the Liberation Army earned for itself an extremely high level of awareness and performance. (*Asia*, pp. 68–69)

*BUT IN MAY 1980, the People's Liberation Army had been empowered to shoot down those who refused to relinquish their weapons. . . . From May to July, grim and bloody battles were fought. . . . Some commanders did not exhibit much tender care for the young. The mopping up operations they undertook, while they heartened the population, were certainly tough upon errant Red Guards. (*Doors, *pp. 481–82) Huang Yongsheng the military commander [of Guangzhou] then harshly suppressed Red Guards who called him the "Butcher of Guangzhou". (*Wind, *pp. 316–17)*

THE RED GUARDS at one time so luridly described in the West were . . . to educate themselves, to reason, to debate. . . . Their contribution was great and significant; they unearthed many agents of the Kuomintang and some spies, caches of bullion and weapons. (*Asia*, pp. 64–65)

*A TEAM OF Red Guards came to investigate [my friends, the Peis]. . . . "I nearly went through the window" said Mrs Pei when at last she talked to me in 1975. "I begged them to let me die. What did they want? Why were we treated in this way? . . . They said we had returned to China to spy." (*Doors, *pp. 457–58) Other relatives of Hualan have died, two of them, husband and wife, committing suicide. They were called traitors, accused of "collusion with the outside", beaten. . . . It is quite a miracle that Hualan was not ill-treated because of me. . . . I walked the small lanes of Peking . . . immediately children ran to announce my coming to the*

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*street committee, and people came to stare at me. Spy mania. (*Doors, *p. 493) Band after band of Red Guards came down our street. . . . A neighbour told them that we had foreign goods, and they turned up everything in our house, dug up the floors and the garden, chipped the plaster off the walls to uncover gold pieces or documents. They took away books, pictures, vases, anything "old" or "foreign", and also a table and a cupboard. (*Doors, *p. 457)*

EVERYONE PRAISED the Red Guards whose conduct was excellent, and who were very clean, well behaved and polite. . . . To pinpoint the few cases of bad conduct is to ignore the discipline and good example of the great majority of these youngsters. . . . Never had China been so exuberant, so alive, so full of the sounds of drums and cymbals and so colourful. . . . The Red Guards were not allowed to carry weapons nor to arrest or try anyone. . . . The Red Guards performed a task no one else could have, they literally spring-cleaned the cities. (*Wind*, p. 292)

*THERE WERE so many absurd and ugly things being done, like the trials in Shanghai of cadres supposed to have committed adultery, who were beaten on the buttocks by self-appointed youthful judges. (*Doors, *p. 458) The brutalities inflicted upon hapless individuals during June and the first part of July [1966] were nothing compared to what happened when the Lin Biao–Jiang Qing alliance won the struggle in August . . . in the universities we saw the teachers sweeping the grounds, cleaning the water-closets and the kitchens. Some wore dunce's caps, others were abused as freaks and monsters." (*Doors, *p. 431)*

THE RED GUARDS learn democracy by applying democratic methods of reason and debate. (*2001*, p. 200) [The Red Guards movement] therefore was no hasty impulsive action opening the gates of hooliganism as reported so erroneously in the Western press. (*2001*, p. 189)

*THE WORST [of the Red Guards] not only burnt books and destroyed historic monuments; they also killed and tortured. (*Doors, *p. 458)*

*"The Red Guards came to get Ho. They took turns beating him in the courtyard. Then they took him away in a truck to the Western Hills where they kept their prisoners. I never saw him again. I don't know why they singled him out. Sometimes it was all so capricious." (*Doors, *p. 457)*

*In the general disruption of order, the cities' jails were opened and criminals released. "They did terrible things . . . if some of us learnt to torture people and to rape, it was they who incited us to do it." (*Doors, *pp. 468–69)*

THE SITUATION at the close of 1966 during the full blossoming of the Cultural Revolution was described as follows: "A vigorous and lively political situation initiated by Comrade Mao Zedong is taking shape throughout our country, in which there are both centralism and democracy, both discipline and freedom, both unity of will and personal ease of mind". . . . This unprecedented and massive experiment is . . . China's way of preparing herself for the future . . . to go on building a socialist system which will provide both material security for the millions and a freedom of spirit which also has never existed in the past millennia. (*2001*, p. 204)

*THE NEIGHBOURHOOD atmosphere had changed—it was hostile. And always in the courtyard there would be one or other member of the street committee watching us. . . . After I had left, Third Uncle's rooms might have been searched. . . . Third Uncle sat in a frightening calm, his body all gathered together, coiled upon the fear at its core. . . . (*Doors, *p. 449)*

*Throughout my Manchurian travels, I was not left alone. Even if I went to the toilet, in some factories and communes, a girl worker would come along with me, and watch me. (*Doors, *p. 503)*

*[An overseas Chinese teacher told me]: "I saw the Red Guards come for me. I was paralysed . . . I could do nothing but open the door for them. For six weeks, they stayed with me in relays, group after group, questioning me; night and day and day and night. . . . I slept no more than two or three hours a night, because they woke me up to question me: Why had I so many Western friends? . . ." (*Doors, *p. 457)*

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THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION is also an enormous spurt to production, to the development of productive forces along socialist lines; for it liberates the innovating spirit of millions instead of holding them in uncomprehending docility.... A new leap forward can be expected, bringing greater acceleration to the development of the economic base. (*Asia*, p. 70)

In terms of practical economics, the Cultural Revolution produces and provides the revolutionary impetus necessary for the accomplishment of the economic breakthrough during the period of the third Five-Year-Plan (1966–70).... An upsurge in production has been reported in the first months of its inception.... This second leap envisages another speeding up development to promote an even greater economic growth rate.... (*2001*, p. 202)

THROUGHOUT the months since that fateful August of 1966, Zhou Enlai had striven to minimise disruption. He had forbidden the interference of the Red Guards with communes and with factories: "Revolution must promote production, not destroy it." But in November, he seems to have lost on this point.... (Doors, *p. 464)*

In February 1967, at a high-level meeting presided over by Zhou Enlai, Marshal Ye Jianying protested at the shambles being created.... By then, almost all the ministers in charge of production were being denounced or hauled away to kangaroo-courts held by Red Guards. The Coal Minister would die of a heart attack under the verbal abuse endured. (Doors, *p. 466)*

Not all the factories were working and in those I saw, about one-third of the machinery was idle. When I pointed to the empty benches, I was told that the workers were "resting" or that "we have fulfilled our quotas", which meant that the workers had not turned up, or the raw material had run out, or the machines needed repairing.... I was not impressed by the young workers. They dawdled and smoked in small groups in the workshops; they played basketball in the courtyards, they loafed on the streets. (Doors, *p. 485) The young workers do not exhibit any discipline. I find dozens of them loafing about in the park with their girl-friends.* (Doors, *p. 499) In Shenyang, the walls of factories are pockmarked with traces of bullets. Gaunt roofless structures reach upward, as after a bombing. There is litter, and cinders; burnt down plants.* (Doors, *p. 502) The steel plant of Anshan has been badly mauled. Large machinery sprawls in despair on the ground, surrounded by squatting workers trying to repair it.* (Doors, *p. 504) In Lanzhou, the Cultural Revolution has been grim and fearful. The workers in the factories shot at each other.* (Doors, *p. 546) In Loyang, the tractor factory is a mess. Screws and bolts and spare parts litter the floor in untidy heaps. The engineer who takes me around ... says: "Our production is not too good...." Of all the disciplines, only archaeology has never been obstructed during the Cultural Revolution.* (Doors, *p. 611).*

INSTEAD OF SIMPLY ADMIRING the kaleidoscopic shimmering texture created by these interwoven contradictions, the more petty-minded viewer may ask the reason for it. Madame Han Suyin's own answer to this question is yet again a splendidly manifold thing.

"In any circumstance, see how the wind blows, and never, never stick your neck out", she wisely recorded in her notes (*Doors*, p. 495). Maoist policy is full of twists and turns, "but still, I managed. Life was a brusque and capricious river, and one learns about canoeing in wayward water" (*Doors*, p. 522). Obviously Madame Han Suyin is a seasoned mariner. Having been quick to observe that "during the last two decades China has not ceased to prove every pronouncement uttered about her false" (*2001*, p. 2), she no doubt reached the sensible conclusion that if one accompanied every statement by a directly contrary statement one was mathematically certain of being right at least half the time. And in any case, truth is a situational matter. "But I know you have not lied", she tells friends who have told her lies. "The human capacity for self-persuasion is infinite. The human soul is an assembly of contradictions. And therefore both your versions, the one of those years, and the one you give today, are correct" (*Doors*, p. 485).

We may assess the reliability of Madame Han

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Suyin in the same spirit as Mark Twain boasted about his own strength of character when he insisted that giving up smoking was the easiest thing in the world—he'd done it a hundred times already. Thus she is consistently loyal to everybody and anybody, providing that they are safely in power. She was loyal to Chiang Kai-shek and then to Mao Zedong, to Liu Shaoqi and then to Lin Biao, to Jiang Qing and then to Hua Guofeng—and we may be sure she is loyal before the event to whoever replaces Hua Guofeng, no matter who it is, so thoroughly has loyalty to established authority become second nature to her. If in the thick of this absorbing exercise she comes to the point of totally overlooking the fate of the Chinese people, and even of actually censoring their cries, then we must clearly excuse her, because, you see, in Asia there is no credence to be given to the hubbub rising from the masses—"especially in feudal Asian countries, the gap between fact and fiction, truth and lies, is so very small" (*Doors*, p. 473). So the safest approach is to stick to the official communiqués provided by the currently ensconced editorial staff of the *Peking Review*.

Only political simpletons will be scandalised by her passing on the propaganda of "the Gang of Four" in the West when the Gang was going strong, only to switch to supporting Comrade Deng now that he has the wind behind him. No, the amazing thing is their amazement. After all, it is more than 2,000 years since Sima Qian (Ssu-ma Ch'ien) immortalised the phenomenon in a superb passage in his *Records of the Historian*. After a period of disgrace Lian Po, famous general of the kingdom of Zhao, was restored to the sovereign's favour.

> "At the moment of his disgrace all his clients had abandoned him; once he was restored to his command they came back to him. 'Get out', he shouted, and one of them replied: 'Come, sir, let us be men of our times. Surely you must know that it is the law of the market that governs human relations? You fall into disgrace and we leave you; you regain the king's favour and we return to serve you. It is as simple as that—nothing to make a fuss about.'. . ."

Yet there are occasions when Madame Han Suyin is overcome by a fit of unwarranted modesty, when she confesses to an ignorance we may find it difficult to credit: "but it was impossible at the time [1969] (and would be impossible for some years, in fact until the end of 1976) to obtain definite, hard-core information on what had happened, although I did my best. . ." (*Doors*, pp. 482–3).

So this particularly gifted, particularly well informed woman, with her privilege of unrestricted entry and direct access to the Chinese leadership, knew less than poor drudges like Simon Leys, Jacques Guillermaz, Ivan and Miriam London, Pierre Illiez, etc. (the names are cited in chronological order), who on the basis of mere scrutiny of the Chinese press, or interviews with refugees, managed between 1971 and 1973 to publish the gist of what she claims to have learned only this late in the day. . . . If Madame Han Suyin kept this up she might almost have convinced us that we are all observers of genius. Unfortunately what she tells us today happens to include decisive experiences and facts which she admits having already collected in China as early as 1966 and 1969—but which did not inhibit her from writing two or three books and even more magazine articles in the same period, presenting the exact opposite of what she already knew. But in reply to this she now alleges her worries about endangering the members of her family living in China. This is a noble concern, and one shared by thousands of Chinese living abroad—but these same Chinese have proved that there existed many honourable solutions to the problem, the simplest and most usual being not to write effusive books about the "Cultural Revolution." Of course that would raise the further problem that those profit-minded bourgeois publishers in the West are not known to pay royalties on silence.

MADAME HAN SUYIN will undoubtedly (and rightly) complain that I have an inferior grasp of dialectics: ". . . It is impossible to explain, or try to explain the historical processes in China in the 20th century, and the thought of Mao Zedong, without referring to dialectics. . ." (*Asia*, p. 34). Dialectics, the performing art which has given this century's intellectual circus some of its most breathtaking feats of acrobatics, must obviously be the very technique to explain the daring somersaults of the Thoughts of Madame Han Suyin. Dialectically speaking, it was she who was right to be wrong, whereas it is we who are wrong to be right.

In any case the media-sociologists and other experts who investigate the machinery of mass communications would certainly benefit from a study of this odd phenomenon: when has such an authoritative reputation been based on such a shifting standpoint? The sole constant factor in her work is the faithfulness with which events have confuted her analyses and forecasts at every turn. This paradox—so solid a reputation built on such a slippery foundation—tends to bear out the old bewilderment once voiced by Henry de Montherlant. "In the main, people do not read; if they read, they do not understand. And those who understand, forget."

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Scott & Amundsen

An Exchange Between

ROLAND HUNTFORD & WAYLAND YOUNG

WHEN Roald Amundsen beat Scott of the Antarctic in the race for the South Pole and, worse still, got back alive, he was greeted in this country by a storm of sentimental rage. In holes and corners, as Lord Kennet [Wayland Young] demonstrates in the May ENCOUNTER, it is blowing still.

My aim in writing *Scott and Amundsen* was to give Amundsen his due and put the record straight. That Lord Kennet chooses to ignore. He takes issue on minor points. There too I am happy to put the record straight. Now and then I must depart from perfect salubriousness. The choice is Lord Kennet's, not mine.

In the tantalising maze of historical research, the fear of missing something is a constant nagging nightmare. I seem to have missed the letters which, according to Lord Kennet, Scott's wife Kathleen wrote to her second husband, the first Lord Kennet, in 1938. These concern her relations with Fridtjof Nansen, the Norwegian explorer, in 1912. Since the publication of *Scott and Amundsen*, the originals, in the Cambridge University Library, have been closed to the public by Lord Kennet. The passages quoted in ENCOUNTER, however, merely show that, 26 years on, Kathleen Scott wished to gloss over a love affair with Nansen, while preserving the kudos of a conquest. The contemporary evidence, which I used in preparing my book, must take precedence.

On 10 January 1912, Nansen telegraphed Kathleen Scott from Christiania (Oslo) to "ORDER ROOMS YOUR NAME" in a Berlin hotel. Kathleen Scott's diary records her arrival in Berlin on 12 January, Nansen following on the 15th, and that they spent a considerable time together. On the 24th, she notes her return home to London, alone.

The following day, the 25th, her diary records unusual relief at the arrival of her menstruation. This was repeated at the next period on 20 February, but disappears thereafter.

This does not, of course, necessarily point to Nansen, but merely concern over sexual intercourse during the relevant lunar periods. Only Nansen, however, had the time, opportunity, motive and desire.

On 24 February, he wrote to Kathleen from the Germany to Sweden ferry to say that he visited the Hotel Westminster in Berlin on his way from Munich and "was sitting for a few hours in that same room, where you were lying on the sofa that last evening. . . ."

LORD KENNET waxes indignant on the subject of my remarks on Sir Clements Markham's homosexuality (Sir Clements being the President of the Royal Geographical Society, and the man who gave Scott his start in polar exploration). Here, however, the author of *Eros Denied* is being a trifle unworldly.

As his voluminous diaries (kept at the R.G.S. in London) show, Sir Clements liked fresh, handsome young midshipmen and cadets. He often invited them to his home. Captain Wilson Barker, commander of the *Worcester* training ship, forbade his boys to accept such invitations.

During the 1890s, Cyril Longhurst was Sir Clements' constant attachment. When they toured Scandinavia together, in 1892, Longhurst was a boy of 13, Sir Clements a man of 60. At the age of 20, Longhurst was installed by Sir Clements as Secretary of the *Discovery* expedition. Scott, selected by Sir Clements to command the expedition, saw Longhurst regularly for over a year in his official capacity. In his diary, he nonetheless pointedly refers to "Markham and his companion, Longhurst" (6 August 1901). This suggests a relationship that was known, and the subject of comment.

THE SICILIAN CONNECTION is, notwithstanding Lord Kennet's protest, real enough. On 14 April 1890, for example, at Cefalù, Sir Clements' diary reads: "Much pestered by many boys . . . by slipping out of the 'Albergo' with one boy, I evaded the others." On 11 May, at Taormina, he writes of "a handsome lad . . . [who] reminded me of Lycidas in Theocritus", and, again the following day of "my

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young friend Lycidas."

This refers to the Seventh Idyll of Theocritus. To call this merely bucolic, as Lord Kennet does, is misleading. It is a paean to homosexual love. Lycidas is a shepherd who sings a song, which, in the translation of A. S. F. Gow, the eminent classical scholar and friend of A. E. Housman, runs

> *"Fair voyage to Mitylene shall Ageanax have . . . if he save Lycidas from the furnace of Aphrodite, for hot is the love of him which consumes me."*

Gow comments that

> "Lycidas' song wishes Ageanax a prosperous voyage to Mitylene on condition that he grants his favours to Lycidas, who is in love with him. . . ."

This goes beyond polite literary convention. Theocritus is the poet of the pederast; his 29th and 30th Idylls; "love of a boy has racked me a month or more . . ." etc., could hardly be more explicit. Of all the classics, Sir Clements chose to read Theocritus, and identify a "young friend" with one of the poet's lovingly portrayed catamites.

THERE IS, *pace* Lord Kennet, something hazy about Sir Clements' naval career. We know, but only at second-hand, that he left the service prematurely as a midshipman, probably in 1852. The only trace of him in Admiralty records, however, is a letter (ADM 2 1280, 16 Jan. 1852) about missing log books.

NEXT, to the mysterious gap in Scott's naval career. Lord Kennet seeks to disprove this gap, because it implies that Scott was missing, a black mark against any officer. Also, it covers an obscure period in Scott's life, about which Kathleen Scott clearly misled a previous biographer, Stephen Gwynn. None of this has appeared in print before.

Admiralty records do not help; they raise the question without answering it. This is, unfortunately, a familiar experience with official papers.

Lord Kennet has recourse to Scott's Service Record (ADM 196/42 p. 501). It should be explained, however, that the Service Record is *not* an exhaustive document. It is a summary to be interpreted with other papers. In this case, it says that between 21 December 1888 and an unspecified date in 1891, Scott was borne on the books of HMS *Amphion* on the Pacific Station. It does *not*, for example, record his loan to HMS *Caroline*, which has to be gleaned from her log (ADM 52 12973).

From 1 August 1889, when Scott left HMS *Caroline*, until 24 March 1890, when HMS *Amphion*'s log (ADM 53 12453) says "joined Lieut. Rob. F. Scott", there is no record of his presence on board any of Her Majesty's ships.

The Admiralty Index (ADM 12 1200) invoked by Lord Kennet is not much help. The entries recording Scott's automatic promotion to Lieutenant and reappointment to HMS *Amphion* are paper transactions. They say nothing about Scott's actual whereabouts. Lord Kennet seizes on the entry of 16 September 1889, which records a telegram appointing Scott to HMS *Swiftsure*, to deny the gap in his service. Telegrams may be sent, of course, but they are not necessarily received. There is no evidence that this one was acted on. The appointment is absent from the Service Record. The log of HMS *Swiftsure* (ADM 53 15928) shows no trace of Scott.

That all was not as it should have been is suggested by another entry in the index (not mentioned by Lord Kennet) showing that Scott's father enquired after him on 4 September 1889. Clearly his father did not know where he was.

Scott himself unwittingly confirms the mysterious gap in his record. The Royal Geographical Society holds a copy in Scott's own hand of his captains' certificates attached to his application for command of the *Discovery* expedition in 1899 (RGS AA 3/3/32R). This, too, is ignored by Lord Kennet. It does *not* refer to HMS *Swiftsure*, although Scott was careful to record everything, even minor appointments of one month.

On his own showing, his service on HMS *Amphion* and HMS *Caroline* totals 1 year 10 months, against the Service Record's figure of $2\frac{1}{2}$ years *covering the same period*, which leaves the mysterious 8 months unaccounted for. Certain Admiralty despatches, round about Scott's service in HMS *Caroline*, might hold the key to the mystery. They are missing, however, and therefore I was quite justified in writing in *Scott and Amundsen* (p. 120) of "an unexplained gap in his career."

"THE HISTORIAN", says Sir Herbert Butterfield, "does not have access to the insides of the people he deals with . . . he has to piece these out from the scraps of external evidence, and he must use his imaginative sympathy, must give something of himself, to the reconstruction of an historical character."

Scott's writings and behaviour suggest a notably self-centred character. As Oates put it (I quote it in my book, p. 420): "The fact of the matter is that he [Scott] is not straight, it is himself first, the rest nowhere, and when he has got what he can out of you, it is shift for yourself." Lord Kennet complains of the way I quote from Oates, but I have not changed the sense, and this is plain enough. In a tight corner, Scott would be likely to abandon a

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companion to save himself.

If Oates had decided to sacrifice himself to save his companions, instead of doing away with himself because his agony was too great, he would have walked out of the tent earlier. When he did so, it was too late to save the others. His record showed him to be a survivor, not a martyr. His whole being suggests that he went out because he did not want to meet his end in the presence of someone he despised.

"Scott's diary is to me unconvincing", wrote James Murray, who was with Shackleton in the Antarctic in 1908–09, soon after reading the first reports of the Scott disaster:

> "If he really wrote what is reported . . . then he was writing for history, and it was not spontaneous. I hope for the real truth from Wilson's diary. . . . I cannot see why they regarded Oates' death as inevitable, when they were only some 30 miles from their big depot, which should have meant safety for all." (James Murray, letter to Lady Shackleton, 13 February 1913.)

Four years later a party on Shackleton's Imperial Transantarctic Expedition was caught in almost exactly the same place as Scott, but worse off. Three men, weakened by scurvy, with four starving and enfeebled dogs, together pulled three sick companions to safety on sledges for three hundred miles. On the face of it, Scott simply sat watching Oates waste away.

Bernard Shaw, in a letter to the first Lord Kennet, made the point: "Scott had . . . to give Oates silent hints that he should go out to perish for a day or two before he did so, too late", going on to say that Scott "could pitch the 'very gallant gentleman' stuff to perfection. Poor Oates!"[1] (28 February 1948).

LORD KENNET REPEATS the ever commoner excuse that Scott's was a scientific expedition. It was not. It was one on which scientific work was also carried out, a rather different thing. The Pole was the main objective, as Scott privately admitted; for example, as I quote in my book (p. 419) when he wrote to Admiral Egerton: "Everything depends on the coming [polar] journey of course." For true scientific expeditions, that is to say those on which science takes priority, one must look elsewhere; to the contemporary expeditions of De Gerlache (Belgian), Nordenskjöld (Swedish), Drygalski (German), Bruce (Scots), and Mawson (Australian). With them, Scott's scientific output does not compare favourably.

Science cannot justify what James Murray called the "wanton and needless waste of those valuable lives." The five lives lost by Scott are equal to the total loss of life during the first seven expeditions to winter in Antarctica. The branches of science concerned are not those which generally call for human sacrifice.

Lord Kennet wishes to perpetuate the myth that the geological specimens that Scott dragged behind him were unique. Not so. Shackleton had brought similar specimens with similar fossils from the same place three years before. Scott had with him a typed copy of Shackleton's published diary of his Southern journey of 1908–09, which we know he compared with his own performance. In the entry for 5 February 1909, he could read: ". . . still hanging on to the geological specimens." Scott was trying to outdo his bitter rival. When he continued to drag his specimens, all 35lbs of them, until he dropped, it was indeed pathetic, not to say ill-judged and futile.

IN MY BOOK ON *Scott and Amundsen*, I was writing about the race for the South Pole, and the lessons to be learned from Amundsen's overwhelming triumph over Scott. Amundsen understood that pioneering was the business of the pioneer and science was best left to those who came after. He provided an object lesson in the principle of concentrating resources. Amundsen did not stoop to use science as an agent of prestige.

The essence of Lord Kennet's plaint is simply that he disagrees with me. Whence he—a former Government minister—predicts that *other* biographers will be penalised by *other* guardians of historical documents. As a logical—and political—proposition this is undeniably of interest. But it is Lord Kennet who has proved obstructive. He it is who has closed collections over which he exercises power. It is he who has announced that he will henceforth grant access only under conditions that suggest a hybrid of censorship and thought control.

Roland Huntford

A Reply

THE KENNET PAPERS in the Cambridge University Library have not been closed to the public. Roland Huntford asked my permission to use them, and I gave it. Subsequent writers have also asked it, and I have given it more often in the

[1] "It is a very great pity that Shaw should have kept a copy of his letter [wrote the first Lord Kennet to Peter Scott, the explorer's son, in 1957] "and that anyone should think of publishing it. I am quite clear that you should do all you can to prevent it."

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year since his book appeared than in any year before.

Mr Huntford made a great many unpleasant and indeed disgraceful statements about Scott and others in his book. The five of them which I examined in the May ENCOUNTER, I challenged him to substantiate. He has not done so.

In his book he wrote: "Nansen and Kathleen Scott had been having a love affair while Scott was on the Southern Road. It was consummated in a Berlin hotel. . . ." In what he now writes, he does not dispute the fact that he held in his hands, on 2 February 1976, letters from Kathleen Scott stating that her friendship with Nansen was "not an *affaire à outrance*", or that he failed to refer to this statement in his book. It is nice that he now goes so far as to say "I seem to have missed" them; but further words would have been even nicer.

Sooner than admit his original assertion was, or even might have been, wrong, he now brushes aside his perfectly forthright statement, and appeals to "contemporary evidence." So we must look more closely at his "contemporary evidence."

THAT NANSEN ASKED HER to "order rooms" in her name in Berlin does not prove that she did so. If she did so, it does not prove that they "consummated" an "affair."

It has already been the subject of mirth in the press that Mr Huntford should think a man looking at a sofa on which a woman has lain is evidence of adultery.

Mr Huntford's statements that on 25 January 1912 "her diary records unusual relief at the arrival of her menstruation" and that "this was repeated on 20 February, but disappears thereafter" are quite untrue. In her diaries she regularly recorded the day her period began, presumably because she led an active social and physical life, and wished to plan ahead. At this time, when she was 32, one evening at home in a fortnight was not unusual; and she was flying, swimming, skating, and often dancing all night, as well as exercising her profession of sculptor, which included more-than-lifesize stone carving. There is no difference between the entries of 25 January and 20 February 1912, and other entries in 1911 and 1912, or indeed other years. Her mark was an asterisk, and sometimes she added the word "came." From December 1911 to November 1912 inclusive, fourteen periods are recorded; for eight of them she used the form "*came"; for six, "*". For those of 25 January, 20 February, 17 March, and 13 April 1912, she used the form "*came."

AGAIN: Sir Clements Markham. It was recorded by his contemporaries, and is disputed by no one, that Markham "liked fresh, handsome young midshipmen etc.", but Mr Huntford's statement was that he "was a homosexual. He sometimes went south to indulge his proclivities safe from criminal prosecution." The idea that a wealthy Victorian traveller coming out of a Sicilian hotel could be "pestered by many boys" *only* because he was busy indulging criminal homosexual proclivities with them is absurd. In poor countries, boys do cluster round tourists; there were, and are, such things as guides, vendors of this-and-that, and beggars. Markham's diaries often record that he took a boy or two boys with him as guides on his walks. Presumably he tipped them. Presumably, being poor, they liked this; and word got around.

Yes, Theocritus' seventh idyll accepts (though it is not "a paean to") homosexual love. Greek lyric poetry usually does. Lycidas was not "the poet's catamite", he was a goat-herd the poet (who was with two friends) met on a walk, just as Markham's Lycidas was. And if every Victorian who carried Theocritus—or Shakespeare's sonnets—around was busy "indulging criminal proclivities", then all those who carry Agatha Christie around today are murderers.

NEXT, Mr Huntford has to substantiate that the twenty-year-old Scott "disappeared from naval records for some time", that he was "adrift for . . . eight months", that there was the "hint of a cover-up." This Mr Huntford cannot do, because of the record he missed of Scott's appointment to HMS *Swiftsure* right in the middle of the period he says he was absent without leave. The suggestion that a telegram did not arrive is fanciful. Nor is it possible to argue the absence of a junior officer from a 19th-century ship from the absence of his name in her log. And Scott's father did not enquire where he was. There is nothing else in what Mr Huntford now writes which substantiates or even tends to substantiate his statements.

THE STATEMENT he has to substantiate about the death of Oates is that he "sat there in the tent, Scott staring at him, with the unspoken expectation of the supreme sacrifice." Nothing in what he writes does that. Neither the quotation from James Murray nor the experience of some members of Shackleton's later expedition are relevant. Bernard Shaw's letter is relevant; but still does nothing to substantiate the statement. Shaw was not on the expedition, and he was writing 35 years later, when he was 90. As most people know, at that age (and indeed well before it) his judgment of men and events was erratic and often mischievous. He thought Stalin and Mussolini were excellent rulers, and had always delighted in offending his very old friend Kathleen Scott (and her second husband) by

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telling her she was a better man than Captain Scott. I should not myself have taken this letter as seriously as my father did.

LAST, science. Mr Huntford is in error in saying that Shackleton had brought "similar specimens . . ." etc. He had in particular not brought back *glossopteris* which (as I pointed out in my article) was all-important. I do not for that think any the less of Shackleton.

The rest of Mr Huntford's reply merely repeats his already familiar, but increasingly implausible, opinion of Scott's character and achievement.

I wonder if Mr Huntford might not now feel it possible he has made some bald assertions which were not really justifiable? If so, it could only do his reputation good to admit as much.

Wayland Young

AUTHORS

Clive Sinclair is the author of *Hearts of Gold*, a collection of short stories published last year by Allison & Busby. He is currently in America for a year on a Bicentennial Arts Fellowship.

Richard Lowenthal was foreign policy leader-writer for *The Observer* during the 1950s, and then, until his retirement in 1978, Professor of International Relations at the Free University in West Berlin. He has recently been Visiting Scholar at the US National Humanities Center. His books include *Model or Ally? Communist Powers and Developing Countries* (Oxford University Press, 1977).

Michael Howard is the newly appointed Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford, where he has for the last three years been Chichele Professor of the History of War. His books include *The Theory and Practice of War* (1965), *The Continental Commitment* (1972), *War in European History* (1976), and *War and the Liberal Conscience* (Temple Smith, 1978); he is co-editor of *Restraints on War* (Oxford University Press, 1979).

Tomas Venclova was born in Lithuania in 1937. The only collection of poems he was allowed to publish in Soviet Lithuania appeared in 1972. In 1977 he was finally allowed to emigrate to the West, and has been living in California.

Jean-François Revel's works published in translation include *The Totalitarian Temptation* (Secker, 1977; Penguin, 1978) and *On Proust* (1972). He is a regular columnist for *L'Express* (Paris), in which his article in this issue first appeared.

François Bondy is an editor of the monthly *Schweizer Monatshefte* and of *Die Weltwoche* (Zurich).

Ruth Padel is a Junior Research Fellow at Wolfson College, Oxford, and Lecturer in Classics at Wadham College. She has just completed two books—*In and Out of the Mind*, a study of psychology in Greek Tragedy, to be published by Oxford University Press, and *Harmonia*, a study of music in Greek myth and accounts of human nature.

John Bossy is Professor of History at the University of York, and author of a study of *The English Catholic Community 1570–1850* (Darton, Longman & Todd, 1976).

Penelope Lively's novel *Treasures of Time* (Heinemann, 1979) won the first National Book Award for Fiction. Her latest novel, *Judgement Day*, appears in November.

Alan Brownjohn's latest book of poems, *A Night in the Gazebo*, published in November by Secker & Warburg, is the "Winter Choice" of the Poetry Book Society.

Simon Leys is the political pen-name of Pierre Ryckmans, a leading specialist in Chinese art and history, who spent several years in China and now teaches in the Department of Chinese Studies at the Australian National University in Canberra. Among his books are *The Chairman's New Clothes* and *Broken Images* (Allison & Busby, 1977, 1979) and *Chinese Shadows* (Penguin, 1978). His article on "The End of Peking's Spring" appeared in the November 1979 issue of ENCOUNTER.

Roland Huntford is the author of *The New Totalitarians*, a study of Swedish Socialism, and *Sea of Darkness*, an historical novel about Columbus. He was until 1974 *The Observer*'s Scandinavian and winter sports correspondent. His book on *Scott and Amundsen* was published last year by Hodder & Stoughton.

Wayland Young (Baron Kennet of the Dene) sits in the House of Lords and is a former junior Minister in Harold Wilson's Labour government. He is the author of many books, including *The Futures of Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 1976), *Preservation* (1972), and *Existing Mechanics of Arms Control* (ed., 1965).

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LETTERS

"Soviet" or "Russian"?

WHEN Richard Pipes faults American foreign policy in *Détente* for being "without theoretical underpinning" he is certainly right—but on mistaken premises ("A Reply" ENCOUNTER, April).

Professor Pipes claims that the main factors which determine current Soviet policy are to be found in the tradition of "patrimonial authority", in "persistent Russian expansion", in the fact that present leaders are the product of the Stalin era, and finally that these leaders are "directly descended from peasantry."

Now, in my view, only Professor Pipes' second point—persistent Russian expansion—is historically correct. W. G. Krasnow easily slides over the historic tradition of Russian expansion and dwells at length on Professor Pipes' inaccuracies in quotation of proverbs, acknowledging the expansion only in the last 60 years of Russian history. But there precisely lies the whole crux of the question, and the sooner Western politicians understand this basic fact, the sooner they will be able to cope with Soviet expansion.

There was certainly no Marxism involved in the over 100-year-long conquest of the Caucasus by the Czarist armies (words like "*vojenno-kavkazskaya doroga*" and "*Hadji Murat*" will certainly have some significance for Professor Krasnow). There was no Stalinism in the partition of the Polish Kingdom nor in the Russo-Turkish wars, no Communist policy programme in the drive through Siberia towards the shores of the Pacific Ocean, nor toward the Dardanelles and the outlet on the Mediterranean. Professor Krasnow would do well to read even such fictional sources as Kipling's "great game" in *Kim* in order to find an explanation of the present Soviet adventure in Afghanistan.

Should one care to find a key and a time-schedule to present and future Soviet expansion, I would recommend an attentive rereading of the testament of the Czar of all the Russians—Peter the Great. No Marxist, no Stalinist, no "descendant of peasants", but the Emperor of Russia prepared the master plan which the present heirs of the throne in Moscow are faithfully following.

It is all laid out there: suppression of other nationalities within the Empire; steady Russification of the ethnically foreign groups within the frontiers of the Union; "interpretation" of any treaty or political stipulation "*ad maiorem* Russia's *gloriam*"—(is there any difference between the reversal of the Treaty of Pereyaslav concluded with the Hetman of the Zaporozhe Cossaks, which begins in the original "as two equal partners (*kak rovnyi s rovniym*)" into a "submission" of the Zaporozhe under the supremacy of the Czar, and the subjugation by force of Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland, formerly free and independent countries? And what about the Soviet manifesto which states: "Self-determination up to separation (*samoopredeleniye vplot do otdeleniya*)" in comparison with the reality of the Baltic countries?

I cannot blame Professor Krasnow for his defence of the Russian policy—"blood is thicker than water", and he is primarily a Russian even though a dissident from the Soviet reality. But I would like very much to see Western scientists and political analysts finally understand that they are not dealing with some unknown phenomenon for which a metaphysical explanation must be found—but with an old-fashioned Russian (not Soviet) imperialism with which the ancestors of Mrs Thatcher (in her office) already had to cope.

And last but not least, concerning the "support to all nationalist movements" by the Soviet Union which Professor Krasnow mentions—doesn't Russian Panslavism, the support to Bulgarian and Serbian nationalists, attempted contacts and support to "dissident" Indian maharajas, and, finally, the use of the Orthodox Church as a political fifth-column in favour of its Patriarch's Seat (Moscow) ring a bell?

No, Professor Pipes, one doesn't have to read deep meanings into popular proverbs, even if one can gain some insight into the soul of "simple people." The rulers—be they Ivan the Terrible or Peter the Great, Nicholas I or Alexander III—or Lenin, Stalin, Malenkov or Brezhnev—are far above and beyond proverbs. They follow the mystique of the "One and Indivisible (*Yedinaya nedelimaya*)" Holy Russia.

ALEXANDER W. SUCHENKO
Ukranian Institute of America
New York City

MR SUCHENKO somewhat oversimplifies the process of Russian and Soviet expansionism: to explain expansionism by expansionism strikes me as tautological. However, the readers of ENCOUNTER ought to be warned that the so-called "Testament of Peter the Great" is a notorious forgery and therefore proves nothing.

RICHARD PIPES
Harvard University
Cambridge, Mass.

Skidelsky's 1930s

IT MAY SOUND ODD, but it seems to me that Robert Skidelsky's article in the June ENCOUNTER misses its own point. That point, as I see it, is that the faith of British Marxists in the 1930s was fundamentally "an *ideological* response to the social, economic and international problems of that decade." Even if those problems were not as dire as the Marxists then believed, they were certainly worrisome and perplexing to most, certainly enough so to evoke a variety of ideological responses.

The greater part of Mr Skidelsky's essay deals with the manifold ways in which the Marxist social, economic and political analysis of the times erred; but this, it seems to me, is *not* the main point, for to observe that this analysis was not, and is not, acceptable as "reasonable (or at least rational) interpretation of the events of the time" is not the slightest bit surprising, nor should it be. No *ideological* response to ambiguous, dangerous, and perplexing circumstances has ever been (or is ever likely to be) a dispassionate, rational, and detailed paragon of instrumental political logic. The language of political discourse at the edge of the fire is evocative, suggestively metaphorical, vividly emotional and, perhaps most important, completely oblivious to cumbersome or troublesome detail. The question is not whether the mythic Marxist analysis of the 1930s was somehow "objectively" correct according to the current historical image, but whether it had the power to mobilise political forces against what the Marxists believed to be the most

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dangerous enemy of the time—Fascism. As Skidelsky points out, in England anyway, the Marxists lacked that power; but *not* merely or primarily because their analysis was objectively faulty.

The ideologically inspired discounting of social and political realities at the altar of political efficacy—by Left, Right, and Miscellaneous—is probably inevitable; but that does not mean that it is always bad as Mr Skidelsky implies. Toward the end of his essay, he seems to imply that irrational forces he once thought necessary in politics for "hopeful reform" should be banished from the political arena altogether in favour of "tendencies" managed by "men and women of creative intelligence", but whose creativity derives in no way from ideology, theology, aesthetics, and other sources of hot-headism.

If this sounds impossible, it is. Like it or not, as Charles A. W. Manning once put it, "Without their credal foundations, politics would be like a play without a plot." There are times when, nuances and complexities aside, one must wash away the grey and choose the black or the white. One cannot always afford to wait until the tides of history have washed away the ambiguous and the uncertain. So perhaps it is true that it *is* a myth that the British "Establishment" of the 1930s was pro-Fascist, but that Establishment traded rather heavily with Nazi Germany and helped strengthen it. How could anyone who even faintly understood the character of Hitler's Germany in the mid- and late-1930s be contented with waiting until "all the facts were in" before *doing something*? And what difference did it make if this Establishment was only shortsighted and confused rather than conspiratorial and sinister? It is undoubtedly true that many Marxists of this generation in the 1930s naively and almost gleefully overlooked the horrors of Stalin's Russia. Many of the apologies are truly nauseating, of that there is no doubt. But "the most thoughtful people of the time" (to use the author's own phrase) may very well have included some of these Marxists who recognised that, in the storm then descending over Europe, a good myth could do far more than tomes of careful, nuance-filled, hesitant and utterly paralysing social analyses. If one agrees that, at the time, it made more sense to oppose one variety of totalitarianism at a time and that the Fascist variety was then the most virulent, then it is interesting to enter the imaginary world of *post-hoc* speculation for a moment.

YES, THE MARXISTS WERE WRONG about the social and political realities of the 1930s, but had they been widely believed, would Britain and France have been as reluctant to cooperate with the Soviet Union? Might such cooperation have precluded the Soviet-Nazi Non-Aggression Pact and "contained" Germany at a far more propitious time? Had the Marxist myths been more popular, would it have helped protect England against Chamberlain's monstrous folly and perhaps allowed Churchill's voice to be heeded sooner?

I happen not to be a Marxist, and I do not propose to assert what the answers to these questions might be. Nevertheless, it does no harm to recognise both that irony is an indelible characteristic of social affairs and that pleas for a rational, unemotional, or scientific approach to politics are still as incongruous with the political world as they ever were. When we go back to look at events 50 years past, it is important to separate the issues involved; for while we have a new set of perplexing problems before us today, there are still those who would act first and contemplate later, and those who invite paralysis by analysis.

If it is possible to be overwhelmed by the former, we may also be underwhelmed by the latter.

ADAM M. GARFINKLE

Philadelphia

1. MR GARFINKLE SAYS that the important question is not whether the Marxist analysis of the 1930s corresponded to the facts, but whether it had the power to mobilise opinion. I disagree. It is terribly important whether people speak true or false; and our judgment of them ought to be affected by which it is. Mr Garfinkle comes close to the position that the only question the historian needs to ask about myths is whether they were effective.

2. I did not say that the right response to the German problem was to do nothing. I suggested that the right response was to rearm. My point was that the Marxist analysis, by identifying the National Government with "Fascism", hindered British rearmament, by casting quite unjustified suspicions on its motives.

3. Mr Garfinkle writes: "Yes, the Marxists were wrong about the social and political realities of the 1930s, but had they been widely believed, would Britain and France have been as reluctant to cooperate with the Soviet Union?" The answer is that had the Communist Party been much stronger, the Right would have drawn closer to Hitler; and the upshot might well have been a quasi-Fascist Britain in alliance with Hitler against the Soviet Union.

ROBERT SKIDELSKY

London

Boggling at the "Boggle Factor"

SO NOW magical beliefs are defended by invoking a "boggle factor" (Renée Haynes, "The Boggle Threshold", ENCOUNTER, August-September)—a pleasant neologism indeed, but otherwise not original. Those of us who examine superstitious claims—whether paranormal, Marxist, or more traditional—with a sceptical and jaundiced eye are accustomed to being told, in more-or-less insulting terms, that we have closed our minds to the light.

Of course it is true that persons quite properly differ in judging the weight to be attached to particular bodies of evidence. But committed believers often exhibit a state of mind which is not the same as accepting very low levels of evidence: rather is it a determination to be deceived. In acute form it was exhibited, e.g., by Conan Doyle insisting on believing that Houdini performed his feats of skill by magical means in the teeth of Houdini's own assurances, and by H. G. Wells insisting on seeing Stalin as a benevolent and beloved humanist. (I cite the failings of two otherwise admirable men, not to denigrate them, but rather to show that very fine minds are not necessarily immune.) The history of para psychology—a dreary story of deception and self-deception, enlivened only by the occasional joke—is of interest only in displaying part of the range of the psychology of belief.

Of course again, it is entirely possible that there are other interactions in the Universe besides the four currently known to Science. To accept one, all that is

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needed is a watertight, replicable experiment—surely not too much to ask?

M. HAMMERTON

Head of Department
Department of Psychology
The University of Newcastle upon Tyne

The Day Karl Marx Discovered Da-Da!

HISTORY HAS long been a branch of literature. Even modern historians sometimes manage to milk a readable story from verifiable documents or from—fiction. Colin Richmond's delightful tale, "The day Henry James discovered Dada" [ENCOUNTER, October 1979] tempts me to trace the term "dada" far further back than Mr Richmond's Cricket Club (and the young Marcel Proust), indeed back to Karl Marx! Marx's pamphlet *Herr Vogt* (1860) contains a chapter called "*Dâ-Dâ* Vogt und seine Studien." Of the book's style Maximilien Rubel, the distinguished Paris Marxologist, on the basis of several remarks by Marx, says that "in some way it anticipates dadaism."[1] In fact, Marx, who wanted (as did his wife) to take the four letters into the title, argued:

> "Dâ-Dâ puzzles the Philistine and is comical. . . . It pleases me, and it fits my system of mockery and contempt. . . ." (Marx to Engels, Sept. 25, Oct. 2, 1860)

Linguistic form, however, is only one aspect of the matter.

The content of Chapter 8 of Marx's *Herr Vogt* may even be a stronger reason for picking, half-a-century later, those two mysterious syllables from a French German dictionary. Marx, first of all, spoke here of German unity and nationality as "hobbies", i.e. pet subjects for Bonapartist France. (*Dada* in French means hobbyhorse with some of the English connotations. It is "yes" in Slavic idioms and signifies babbling to the Germans.) He, next, not only defended Germany but also Rumania against Pan-Slavism whose historical guilt he described in great detail.

According to the art historian, Karin Thomas,[2] it was Richard Huelsenbeck and the "Rumanian" Hugo Ball who used that dictionary for the baptismal name of their movement. But Ball, actually, was born in Pirmasens. Tristan Tzara and Marcel Janco were the Rumanians among the founding fathers of *Dadaism*.

Marx, finally, here and in another chapter, warned Switzerland against the attempts of Vogt, "the new Swiss, citizen of the Canton of Bern, and councillor in Geneva", to "study" the Swiss past in order to move its future in the direction of French policy. Such a book, no doubt, was available in more than one Zurich library.

Towards the end of Chapter 8 we are told that a pamphlet by Napoleon III had been translated by an Arab in Algiers named Dâ-Dâ into his own flowery language. Hence "Vogt, der deutsche Dâ-Dâ", implying that Vogt was the French Emperor's German panegyrist.

If anyone present during the selection of the word (it might have been Ball, who called the name in a volume of memoirs "his proposal"[3] and by the spring of 1915 had been studying Marx) had read, or heard of, that part of the satirical opus, this might well have constituted the subconscious channel which, according to the favoured school of psychology (that of C. G. Jung), opened up the hidden meaning of the seemingly meaningless.

In any case, the contributors to the undogmatic, "Western" edition of Marx's collected works planned for the centenary of 1983 are invited to shed more light on "the day Karl Marx discovered Da-Da."

HELMUT HIRSCH

Düsseldorf

[1] Maximilien Rubel, *Bibliographie des oeuvres de Karl Marx* (Paris, 1956), I, p. 154. (Marx, in a curious bit of vanity, said he didn't want to call his work simply "*Karl Vogt*" because it would have to be followed on the title page by *Karl Marx*!)

[2] Karin Thomas, *Stilgeschichte der bildenden Kunst im 20. Jahrhundert* (Köln, 1975), p. 102.

[3] Gerhardt Edward Steinke, *The Life and Work of Hugo Ball, Founder of Dadaism* (The Hague, 1967), p. 115.

"Victims of Yalta"

CONCERNING the article by Nikolai Tolstoy [ENCOUNTER, June] relating to the forced repatriation of Soviet citizens who had served in various German formations, I can only say that at the time, and from the point of view of someone serving in the US forces, it struck one as only natural that these people should be returned. Didn't we take it for granted that Joyce (Lord Haw-Haw) and Ezra Pound be returned, whether they so desired or not?

Although I was not connected with those people in any official capacity, nevertheless, since I spoke German, Serbo-Croatian and some Russian, I was continually being called upon to interpret. What struck me most about those unfortunates was how quickly they had become "Germanised." One question I was called on to answer nearly every day was "Why did you let so many Jews into your Army?" Even the Kalmücks asked that question. Tragic victims of the vicissitudes of War or not, those people certainly did not make a very wholesome impression. I should certainly not have recommended their entry into the US.

Concerning George Urban's conversations with Milovan Djilas, in part on this same subject [ENCOUNTER, December 1979], I likewise cannot help but comment on certain aspects. In the autumn of 1966, during a conversation with a group of Zagreb intellectuals, mostly of the *Praxis* group, I brought up the question of Djilas. I was answered from all sides: "*Zidani Most*." Mystified, I asked what was so peculiar about Zidani Most (Steinbrück); I had been there any number of times. "Zidani Most was where Djilas shot all the returning *domobranci*." Note that they didn't say "Djilas ordered. . . . or Tito ordered. . . .", as George Urban suggested. No, they said "Djilas shot . . .", which speaks volumes for Croatian attitudes to Montenegrins. I was going to write Mr Urban at the time, but did not think it that important. Now Mr Tolstoy suggests an Investigation. What good will that do? Doesn't he realise that every war brings with it unforeseen disasters? Isn't that what all Goya's etchings are about? Those about War, I mean.

I wonder if your readers realise how much bitterness there still is in Yugoslavia? The Russians, for example, chiefly "White Russians"—in the early 1920s the country was flooded with them. Even Djilas had some as school-teachers in Montenegro. The Karadjordjević

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family went out of their way to find these people jobs and homes. Most of the able-bodied men went into the Border Patrol. Some went into the Army. Others became professors in Belgrade and Zagreb and Ljubljana. But how did these Russians thank their benefactors in 1941, when the Germans arrived? How many of them joined the *Dobrovoljački korpus* to fight the "Reds", mostly Serbian partisans? This still strikes me as the height of perfidy. Yet nothing happened to those people, they not being Soviet citizens; or practically nothing happened to them.

I can't help but feel like asking Nikolai Tolstoy what uniform he was wearing in June, say, of 1944. The green of the Wehrmacht or the brown of the *Dobrovoljački korpus*?

Please excuse me for getting emotional. Not everyone there collaborated, not Peter Struve, for example, in Belgrade, nor Vladimr Mošin in Zagreb. Perhaps Mr Tolstoy was likewise utterly unconnected.

NOEL VOGE
Professor of Russian and Comparative Literature
Kyoto
Japan

I AM NOT VERY CLEAR about the point Professor Voge is making. To whom—and by whom—were Joyce and Pound "returned" ?

Is it surprising that many of the Russians had succumbed to Nazi propaganda? Thanks largely to the deficiencies of Soviet education the majority were practically illiterate, and had they stayed at home they would no doubt have mouthed the clichés of an equally repellent ideology. Professor Voge appears to overlook the fate that awaited the repatriates. Otherwise the comment that "these people did not make a very wholesome impression" would sound horribly close to the cynical remarks of *SS*-guards at Mauthausen or Maidanek. Above all, Professor Voge ignores the fact (familiar to Thomas Brimelow and his Foreign Office colleagues) that thousands of those returned were innocent women and children. Or had the babies become "Germanised"?

I will satisfy Professor Voge's curiosity as to my own role in 1944. My uniform at that time was the green blazer of an English preparatory school.

NIKOLAI TOLSTOY
Cricket Malherbie
Somerset

Sex-Linguistics

IN "LETTERS" (ENCOUNTER, February) D. Israeli with amusing irony challenged members of the sex liberation. To philologists—a rather uncared-for race of scholars nowadays—the problems in question are, I am sure, less enigmatic, or less aggressive, than Women-Libbers might like to think. Here are some grammatical elucidations:

"*das* Mädchen": a diminutive of *die* Magd, LAT. *puella*, MIDDLE HIGH GERMAN: *maget*, *magt*.
"*das* Fräulein": diminutive of *die* Frau, MHG. vrouwe.
"*das* Frauenzimmer": originally a separate room (*das* Zimmer) for the female members of the household.
"*das* Weib" (gram. origin obscure), diminutive: Weibchen, Weiblein.
"*der* Backfisch: der Fisch zum Backen (i.e. not for boiling or stewing, as it is still too young—not quite mature yet).

I want to stress how important social and political changes are reflected in the vocabulary and how the above-mentioned female designations have fallen from their once high estate in family and society into desuetude or even gone up from a low level to a higher one. *Mädchen* (or south German *Mädel*) is often used in the sense of *Dienstmädchen*; its equivalent term is (das) *Dirndl*, Middle High German *dierne* (fem.): die *Dienerin*, i.e. the low-born simple hand-maid (but this was the designation even for the Virgin Mary!). Nowadays *Dirne* (fem.) has fallen to its lowest level, meaning "woman of easy virtue."

Fräulein is another casualty. In MHG *frouwe* denoted a woman (lady) of a social or political high-ranking position. Yet now we speak of *Hausfrau*, *Ehefrau*, *Frau Nachbarin*, and *Putzfrau* (cleaner) etc.

Weib, the collective term for "Mädchen" and "Frau", is also a fascinating case, as its evaluation, in the Middle Ages, went up the scale; the Middle High German Minnesinger Walther von der Vogelweide raised the term "wīp" (Weib): denoting a high- *or* low-ranking woman, and he paid homage to "wīp" with his famous words: "*wīp muoz iemer sīn der wībe hōhste name*" (woman must always be women's highest name). But to other Minnesingers the term *frouwe* remained the designation for the high-ranking female.

Backfisch (flapper) was originally a students' slang expression. Now it is colloquially used for a girl in her late teens. The North American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, seeking no derogatory term for the teenager, paid homage to the mystery of "maidenhood" with the unforgettable lines:

> *"Standing, with reluctant feet,*
> *Where the brook and river meet,*
> *Womanhood and childhood fleet!"*

AUGUST CLOSS
University of Bristol

That Old-Time Religion

IN HIS excellent article, "The View from East of Eden" [ENCOUNTER, June], Alain Besançon observes that

> "It is no secret that the United States is the last outpost of religious beliefs in the developed Western world. Religious observance prevails among the majority of the population (Protestant, Catholic, Jewish); as many as two-thirds are 'practising believers', which is several times the European rate. . . ."

Recent studies by the American pollster George Gallup and by *The Economist* buttress Mr Besançon's observation. But the problem with these studies is that they merely reveal external conduct and intellectual assent; they do not and cannot measure genuine holiness.

Being genuinely religious means more than wearing sandals and a beard and singing religious folk songs; more than placing *Praise the Lord* bumper stickers on cars; more than praying for your favourite athletic team; more than telling everyone how much you "love" God, country, apple pie, and mentally retarded children so you can win an election or a *Miss America* contest; more than using religion to cloak personal or governmental wrong-doing; more than using religion to buttress injustices in the social, economic and political *status quo*;

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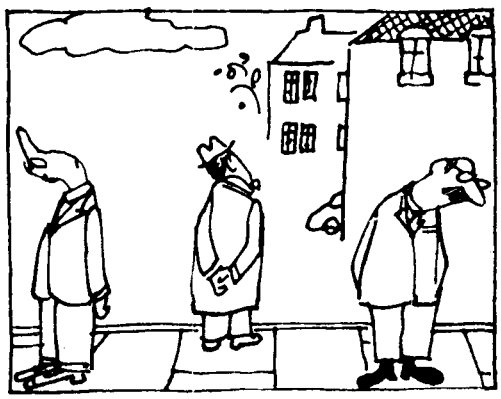
more than using religion to support revolutionary movements; more than attending church for the social, economic and political contacts or because it's the socially acceptable way to spend a Saturday or Sunday, "the American thing to do."

I wonder if the religious observance that Mr Besançon found in America is really genuine holiness and commitment to traditional Christianity and Judaism or whether in fact it actually is devotion to the "American civil religion" (i.e., the pernicious identification of the Cross and the Flag) and to an effeminate kind of religiosity that eschews suffering, self-sacrifice, and the Cross.

HAVEN BRADFORD GOW

Arlington Heights
Illinois

The Consciousness Raisers



A CANT **phrase which has broken out all over the place in the last few years and is now spreading more and more rapidly is "raising consciousness." We need, as the saying is, to do a lot more work on this.**

The phrase seems to have appreared first in connection with the odious "women's lib" movement. It may, for all I know, have come over from America with that movement itself. It is now used in all sorts of connections: "raising black consciousness", "raising working class consciousness", "raising environmental consciousness", "raising art consciousness", and so on. The only thing these varying applications of the term have in common is that they all seem to be malignant, silly or both.

I DARE SAY that if one saw a man standing motionless in the street, staring at nothing in particular, and asked him what he was doing he would as likely as not reply: "I am raising my consciousness."

BUT *what does it mean? It may be that if it means anything at all "raising your consciousness" means dwelling on some supposed grievance or injustice or deficiency in yourself to a point where your consciousness of anybody or anything else is lowered and may even disappear altogether.*

Peter Simple

in the DAILY TELEGRAPH (*London*)

"Australian Misunderstandings"

ALAN HUGHES errs in his letter (ENCOUNTER, August-September) when he states that error has rights. Error doesn't have rights. It is persons who have rights; and even a person in a state of error on a specific matter still maintains those rights.

GREGORY MCMAHON

Accrington
Lancs

DR KNOPFELMACHER (Letters, August/September) seems to me bent upon confusing an issue in Australian public debate which ought to be crystal clear. The pith of the "Bennett affair" in this country lies in two parts. Firstly, when were Bennett's ludicrous "no-Holocaust" views contested? The answer: as soon as they were put, and in February 1979 by Dr Alan Hughes and others. The second is quite distinct: when did Bennett declare that "the Holocaust was a Zionist lie"—and what was done? The answer: in late October 1979; he was immediately condemned as a civil liberties spokesman by Dr Hughes, who then took active steps to remove him from his position.

This, I think answers Dr Knopfelmacher's rhetorical question—"Was this prompt?" Dr Hughes was indeed prompt.

As a person with a Jewish background who has been active in public life I believe I should assure readers of ENCOUNTER that Alan Hughes has a record of opposition to anti-Semitism or any other form of racism which is beyond question.

HOWARD NATHAN

Melbourne

Aron on the Nazis

IN HIS SEARCH for an adequate explanation of National Socialism (ENCOUNTER, June) Raymond Aron makes reference to the possible role of psychiatry in helping elucidate historical phenomena. The examples he cites from Emmanuel Todd's book, like so many of the genre, are certainly unconvincing. However, as I argued in your columns recently ("The Psycho-Historians", ENCOUNTER, March 1979), from the standpoint of a professional psychiatrist there is an area of overlap between the discipline of history and the study of individual or group mental aberrations which lends itself legitimately to joint inquiry outside the terms of reference associated with either Freud or Toynbee. No one would be better qualified than Professor Aron to participate in collaborative study of this type.

MICHAEL SHEPHERD

Institute of Psychiatry
Maudsley Hospital
London

Androleptic?

IN RE "Androlepsy"—I have to inform the *New York Times*, through you, that Merriam-Webster's New International Dictionary has got it wrong ["Life & Letters Today" May, p. 971].

The *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (3rd edition) correctly explains that *androlepsy* was an Athenian

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custom whereby, if a citizen were killed abroad, and his death unatoned for, three subjects of the offending country were seized as reprisals. This is following Liddell and Scott, who give the origin of the expression.

The handling of the crisis by both the Iranian and American Governments has been, perhaps, *cataleptic*. But it has not, at the time I write this, reached the *androleptic* stage.

PETER CANHAM

Tisbury
Wiltshire

"Austrianisation"

M. J. LASKY's remarks on the Austrian treaty (ENCOUNTER, July) raise the question as to why and how the treaty should have come to pass.

Surely the Austrian case is unique, couldn't apply to Finland or Afghanistan, and isn't likely to be repeated. Of the positive factors, from the Russian viewpoint, perhaps the most important was the withdrawal of Allied forces back into Europe. The Russians were not afraid of the Austrians, at least of an Austria separated from and independent of Germany. What they were afraid of was Germany in NATO. The treaty helped seal the separation of Austria from Germany. The partition of Austria would have meant a British-French-US presence 200 miles further East at the Enns, from which the Russians had nothing to gain. Lasky is quite right about the treaty being a let-down for Dulles: to Dulles the treaty was a retreat; he wanted to keep the troops at the Enns, and if possible bring Austria into NATO.

There is considerable evidence that the Russians had no really considered policy on Austria in the post-War years. They accepted the advice of Ernst Fischer that the Communist Party would poll 23% of the vote, and accepted a totally free election in autumn of 1945. It was a tremendous mistake as they got 4.2%! (The Russians presumably figure that they can wiggle through to control, with 20%; in Czechoslovakia in 1947 they got 38%.) But even before this, Renner had seized the initiative before the Americans arrived to create a government for Austria and Vienna. The Americans helped by General Clark's insistence on early elections, and the Austrians by turning out in large numbers to vote. Another Russian mistake was to permit a clause in the Allied Control Agreement that permitted the Austrian government to negotiate a separate agreement with each occupying government without going through the Allied Council. The Americans used this to sign up the Austrians in the Marshall Plan. Then one has to take account of the strong Austrian leadership. No other Russian-occupied country in those years had people of the calibre of Figl, Helmer, Gruber, Renner, Schaerf, and others who stood up to the Russians (and to the Americans for that matter) and pushed consistently for Austrian sovereignty.

The behaviour of the Red Army upon the occupation of Vienna has to be weighed. Its conduct was so bad that the vote for the Communist party in the 1945 election had to be reduced. Finally, there were the German assets in Austria. There is some evidence that the Russians always, or, perhaps primarily, thought of Austria in terms of Reparations. They proposed a treaty based on Reparations in 1949, which the Allies were not quick enough to grab; and when they finally settled, the German properties and other Reparations were a major element in the settlement.

I am convinced one has to discount possibilities of Austrian neutrality being transferable to Afghanistan. Since no Afghan can tolerate a Communist government, even a fig-leaf to the legitimacy of Communist control is impractical. Such a government of coalition would be immediately massacred by irate Afghans. "Neutralisation" is conceivable only if the Russians wanted to use it as a smoke-screen for real withdrawal, and true neutrality would mean returning to the pre-1978 condition.

SIMON BOURGIN

Washington, D.C.

"Regrettable Error"

The Editor,
The Observer,
London. **11 September 1980**

Dear Sir,

Your "Public Eye" columnist Richard Hall ("Hatchet Job Revealed", Observer, *7 Sept., p. 2) tries melodramatically to link* ENCOUNTER *in some sinister way with an article which the* Sunday Telegraph *innocently published and which we are supposed to have reprinted—a so-called solicited "hatchet job" in which Arthur Goodhart, the distinguished Oxford Professor of Jurisprudence, "discredited" two leading critics of the Warren Commission. This sounds like a fancy bit of collusion. The hard fact of the matter is that we never published the article in question.*

You have a whole week to check and even double-check on a fact. There is an index and file of ENCOUNTER *in every major library, even in the* Observer's *own reference room. You could have dialled our telephone number, and we would have been happy to confirm or deny whether we had or had not published.*

What kind of "evidence" misled you—hearsay, fantasy? Whose "hatchet job" is here revealed? I think you owe us a plain apology.

Yours faithfully,
MELVIN J. LASKY
Editor

ED. NOTE: *The Observer* declined to publish the above letter, but in its next issue acknowledged the inaccuracy and did apologise for the "regrettable error."

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Life & Letters Today

London

WEIGHTY QUESTION: When Ronald Waldman went to America in search of material as head of BBC Light Entertainment, his opposite numbers were always greatly puzzled by his title. "Do you mean," asked one TV executive, "to say that you have heavy entertainment in Britain?"

DAILY TELEGRAPH

Westminster

CALLAGHANISMS: *Mr Callaghan's place in British political history may not be too secure as yet. But at least there is a good prospect that, along with dear Mrs Malaprop and the great Dr Spooner, Mr Callaghan's name will go down in English dictionaries [Andrew Alexander writes].*

After he had laboriously explained to the House of Commons yesterday that there were more people at work in manufacturing industry than in 1970, Mr William Clark, Tory MP for Surrey East, demanded to know why, in that case, output was down.

Mr Callaghan paused and then solemnly declared: "It's a consequence of our low productivity." (Tory hilarity.)

Hence a "Callaghanism": A ludicrous truism, preferably uttered with great solemnity: an attempt to explain a problem by restating it, etc.

When you come to think about it, Callaghanisms could be a sort of party game at home. Players (of all ages) could be given subjects and invited to explain or describe each phenomenon with a Callaghanism. For example:

THE COLD: *The cold weather is a problem caused by the drop in temperature.*

ILLITERACY: *If people do not learn to read you are liable to have illiteracy.*

INFLATION: *Inflation can be cured once prices stop rising.*

POVERTY: *Poverty is primarily concentrated among the low paid.*

All unawares, our Prime Minister had shown himself to be fully the equal of President Warren G. Harding, who once remarked, without fear of contradiction: "When large numbers of men are out of work, unemployment results."

MAIL/TELEGRAPH

London

"RUSSLISH": *Nine years ago the Russians published a dictionary of new words in their language, including words that they had borrowed from English [Adrian Room writes].*

A somewhat similar dictionary has just appeared in Moscow giving new words and expressions noted in the course of 1977.

They include **basing** *(bussing),* **ippi** *(yippy),* **kriketist** *(cricketer),* **bleyzer** *(blazer),* **brifing, interfeys, pornobiznismen, seks-shop, tabloid, mass-media, kserokopirovaniye** *(Xeroxing),* **skeytboard** *(also translated as* **trotuarny syorfer,** *corresponding to the American "sidewalk surfer") and* **supervoumen** *(superwoman).*

*Among translated expressions taken direct from English for 1977 were parcel bomb (***bomba-posylka***), brain-drain (***utechka umov***), sit-down demo (***sidyachaya demonstratsiya***) and brainwashing (***promyvaniye mozgov***). This last is specified as being "in the prisons of certain capitalist countries."*

*A nice borrowing from French worth noting is the word for a buffet supper or reception—***alafurshet** *(French à la fourchette).*

Further such new-word dictionaries are announced, up to and including 1984.

THE TIMES

New York City

ONE: *I have thrown an irrational hate on the formal pronoun "one" [William Safire writes].*

One has to lift one's pinky to refer to one's self in the spoken language—why, then, must one use "one" in writing prose? The form is standard British usage, but it has not travelled well.

In an age when writing is becoming more personal—more one on one—it makes no sense to strain to retain the impersonal "one." If it makes you feel awkward, you don't have to use it—which comes more comfortably to the pen than "If one feels awkward, one does not have to use it."

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE

New York City

SLOW SPEED: An apology is due to The Journal of Commerce for a hoot of derision recently at a headline that read: "Slowdown is Accelerating."

That metaphor was neither skewed nor mixed. Although a contradiction is apparent, the contradiction is not real, as many physics students and other velocity freaks have pointed out.

Acceleration is commonly thought of as the rate of change of velocity. Hence, positive acceleration refers to a speedup and negative acceleration (or deceleration) to a slowdown. But such common thought is mistaken: Velocity is the rate of change (with respect to time) of position, and acceleration the rate of change of velocity.

In case that whizzed past you in slow motion, consider this example: "A car going 60 miles per hour slows uniformly to 57 miles per hour in three seconds, then from 57 to 50 in the next three seconds, and finally from 50 to 30 in the next three. The car has been slowing down more and more with every three seconds—hence, an accelerating slowdown."

In common use, "accelerate" means "to go faster"; in technical use, it means the rate at which you go either faster or slower. The language is biased, then, in the direction of increased speed: for example, there is a "speedup" but no "speeddown." Such are the brakes.

NEW YORK TIMES

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